节司金兰

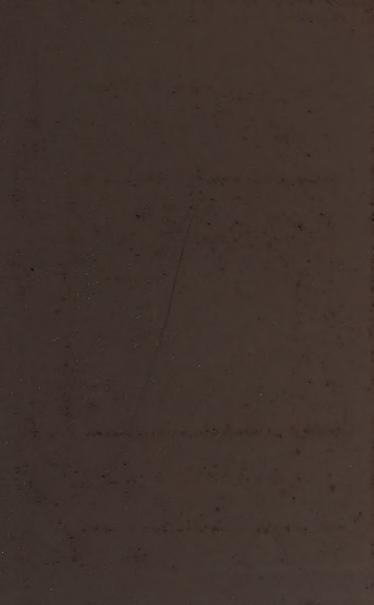
RAGS AND TATTERS



AND ENTER BOYS AND CIRLS TO THE PROPERTY OF TH

19-53





Georgie Eleanor Paul 38 grenhill grarden, Edinburgh gral britan ebritot ils Scotland Earl Ewhert



PAGE 187.

Frontispiece.

RAGS

AND

TATTERS:

A STORY FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

..

STELLA AUSTIN,

AUTHOR OF "STURYS" "SOMEROOT," "FOR OLD SAKE'S SAKE,"
"UNILE PRIME," DYC.

Faurik Shition.

LONDON:

! MASTERS AND CO., 78, NEW BOND STREET.



RAGS

AND

TATTERS:

A STORY FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

BY

STELLA AUSTIN,

AUTHOR OF "STUMPS," "SOMEBODY," "FOR OLD SAKE'S SAKE,"
"UNCLE PHILIP," ETC.

Hourth Edition.

LONDON:

J. MASTERS AND CO., 78, NEW BOND STREET.

MDCCCLXXVIII.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY J. MASTERS AND CO.,
ALEION BUILDINGS, BARTHOLOMEW CLOSE.

TO THE

PRESENT CHOIR BOYS OF S. PAUL'S, BRIGHTON,

THIS STORY

IS DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR.





CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.	
Cook's Saucepans	PAGE I
CHAPTER II.	
THE MILLER'S POND	20
CHAPTER III.	
Val's Choice	38
CHAPTER IV.	
TED'S PERPLEXITY	57
CHAPTER V.	
Mother's Room	74
CHAPTER VI.	
Louisa Selina Clementina	89
CHAPTER VII.	
Val's Conquest	104
CHAPTER VIII.	
SIMPLE SIMON	125

vi

CONTENTS.

		CHA	PTER	IX.					
Nurse dreams .									I38
		CHA	PTER	. X.					
"LE SOMMEIL DE	L'E	NFANT	JESUS	32 5. •		•	•	•	148
		CHA	PTER	XI.					
VAL'S SECRET .	•	٠	•	٠	•	•	•	•	164
		CHAI	PTER	XII.					
TED'S WHISTLE									175

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the Great God Who loveth us
He made and loveth all."





RAGS AND TATTERS.

CHAPTER I.

COOK'S SAUCEPANS.

"I'T doesn't look as if it *ever* would leave off."
"I wish *you* would leave off grumbling, Val," says
Stuart, "what with the weather out and you in, it is
enough to give a fellow the blues."

Val, who is kneeling on one of the broad windowseats, his nose flattened to an unearthly whiteness against the window-pane, turns round, stretches himself, and yawns.

"I meant to have had a jolly time of it to-day," he says in the same dejected voice, "and now there is nothing to be done."

"Plenty to be done if you only choose to do it," begins Stuart in such fatherly tones that Nannette interrupts him by a loud laugh.

"Well done, Stuart," she says mockingly; "now then Val, prepare! Stuart is going to lecture us upon the proper use of our time; go on, Stuart, we are all waiting," and Nannette, who has been tilting herself backwards on her chair, suddenly jerks it to its proper position, and, with her hands folded demurely on her lap and the corners of her mouth drawn down, looks across solemnly at Stuart.

Stuart throws upon the table the book he has been reading, and gets up rather crossly. Before he can speak, a grave, rebuking voice is heard from a distant corner of the room.

"I wish, Nannie, you would learn to sit properly upon your chair, and not tilt it backwards in that vulgar fashion. Mrs. Baker is always telling you about it."

"Oh, Mother Fidget," sighs Nannette, with an impatient wriggle. "You tease much more than Mrs. Baker."

"Well," says Stuart, "I can't say you are any of you pleasant company for a wet afternoon; it seems to me that everybody is put out with everybody, it is not lively, to say the least, and I, for one, shall go."

"Where?" asks Nannette, eagerly.

"Up stairs to my carpentering," replies Stuart.

"Let me come and help," says Nannette, rousing herself, "do, Stuart, please."

"Help?" echoes Stuart disdainfully, "as if any girl ever knew anything about carpentering. No, thank you,

Nannie. Good bye all, and when I come back I hope I shall find you in a livelier frame of mind."

"It's the weather," yawns Val.

Stuart shuts the door after him with a bang that sounds through the house, and, along the passage and up the stairs he sings at the top of his voice,

"For the weather has got no business with us,
And we have none with the weather;
And temper and weather are different things,
But they always go together."

"I shall take my drawing into the study," says Laura, the one Nannette called Mother Fidget, "for Father will be coming home soon."

And Laura, gathering up pencils, paper, paint-box, follows Stuart's example, and departs.

Now the two elders have gone the affairs in the school-room do not seem to mend. Nannette is still tilting herself backwards, balancing her chair upon one leg and holding on lightly by the table. The way in which she manages to right herself whenever she is almost upon her back, shows that the position is not a new one to her, and that it is only by much practice she has attained to such perfection in the art. Val is still whitening his nose against the window-pane; Connie is sitting listlessly in a rocking-chair, too lazy even to rock herself to and fro; Ted is in the only arm-chair the room possesses, a well-worn leather one, his legs thrown over its arm, his face buried in a book.

This, at last, rouses the suspicions of Nannette. "Val," she whispers, "see Ted. I never knew him take to a book before; he isn't reading, he can't be reading, he must be asleep."

"I don't think he is," says Val lazily, "it's the book Father gave him. Ted began it this morning, and said it wasn't a bad sort of book—for a book, you know. I am going to read it next."

"Ah, 'Alice through the Looking-glass,'" says Nannette, "I read it yesterday, it is fun."

Val yawns.

"Oh, Val," says Nannette, reproachfully, "don't yawn so. I can't help yawning when I see any one else yawn. There!" And Nannette tries to strangle a yawn, but ends by laughing when she sees that Connie is just trying the same thing.

"I cannot think what has come over us this afternoon," says Nannette, rising and giving herself a good shake.

"It's the weather," mutters Val in a depressed voice.

"And you," says Nannette, pulling him off the window-seat. "Stuart was right, Val, you are as bad as the weather. Why we have had many a wet day before, and we never have been so moping and so die-away as this."

"I don't believe there *ever* was such a horribly wet, won't-leave-off-raining day since the Flood," says the not-to-be-consoled Val, as he struggles to his seat and his beloved window-pane.

"No," says Nannette, firmly holding him in her strong arms, "you shan't go there again. Why, Val, your nose is quite short and snub enough without flattening it against the window. You will have no nose at all soon!"

"I don't care about my nose," says Val sulkily, and he puts up his hand to his face as though to make quite sure that that *very* short and much-turned-up feature is in its right place. "One beauty in a family is quite enough."

"Well, I don't know," says Nannette, releasing Val, as she sees he is really getting cross. "I should not at all mind being beauty number two. Do you know, Val, that taking us altogether I am afraid there is no doubt but that we are a *very* plain family."

"Speak for yourself," answers Val.

"Yes, I know I am not good-looking," replies Nannette cheerfully, as one who has long ago made up her mind to an unpleasant fact. "But I am not sure about Connie. Connie, I do think some people might call you not bad-looking, considering you are one of us."

Val turns round to examine Connie critically. She is fair,—the fairness that we call "waxen fairness." Long flaxen curls, and a pale very fair complexion. Her features are passable, and she would be pretty, if her light eyes had more colour and depth, and if she had not such a washed-out appearance.

Val takes a long look at her. Connie, not a bit

daunted by Val's and Nannette's stare, raises her face and innocently awaits their verdict.

"She—might—be—worse," is Val's opinion given very slowly.

"That is just what I say," replies Nannette brightly, "you and I always do agree, Val."

Val, flattered by his opinion being approved of, allows himself to be coaxed back into good-humour.

"Violet might grow up very pretty," he suggests.

"She *might*," answers Nannette doubtfully, "but at present she is such a Ball o' Fat there is no telling what she is like. Dear little Lump of Delight, I shall go and see if she is awake."

Nannette is sauntering out of the room, when she stops at the back of Ted's chair and leans over it.

"Where are you, Ted?" she asks.

Ted grunts, and points with his finger, too much interested to answer her question otherwise.

"Yes, this *is* fun," says Nannette, and she reads on with Ted, getting quite as deeply engrossed as though she had not read the story before.

Another yawn from Val.

Another yawn from Connie.

"Oh dear," sighs Val.

"Oh dear," sighs Connie.

A scream from Nannette. Such a jump that she nearly jumps over the back of the arm-chair upon the top of the astonished Ted.

"What is the matter?" asks Ted.

"Nothing is the matter," says Nannette, clapping her hands, "only—oh, Val, I have got *such* an idea!"

Ted returns to his book feeling it has nothing to do with him; Val brightens and willingly leaves his window-seat and window-pane; Connie draws near, her light eyes opened wide in expectation; while Nannette says excitedly,

"It's in that book—Ted's book. It's such a jolly idea; you can't understand it without the book; oh, Ted, give it to me."

Ted hands her the book at once.

"Here it is," says Nannette, turning the leaves over until she finds the place, while Val and Connie, who have not read the book, crowd closely to her as she points and explains. Ted left out in the cold, looks on and listens too.

"It is about Tweedledum and Tweedledee, these two funny little fat men," says Nannette. "Now we will miss over this part about the 'Walrus and the Carpenter,' and come to where they have their fight. We will act this,—you shall be Tweedledee, Val, and I'll be Tweedledum, and Ted and Connie shall dress us up."

Val seizes eagerly upon the idea, and takes the book to study the picture; Nannette runs to Laura's table and examines the things upon it.

"Just to make sure Mother Fidget has not left any-

thing about that she may have to come back and fetch," she explains.

"Trust her for that," says Val, "she is much too careful."

There may be some,—I think the number must be very few,—who read this, who are not acquainted with that charming book, the one in question, "Alice through the Looking-glass." For the benefit of these I will describe the part Nannette and Val have settled to act. The verses about it are these,—

"Tweedledum and Tweedledee
Agreed to have a battle;
For Tweedledum said Tweedledee
Had spoiled his nice new rattle.

"Just then flew down a monstrous crow,
As black as a tar-barrel;
Which frightened both the Heroes so,
They quite forgot their quarrel."

The story tells how Alice in her wanderings through the Looking-glass world comes across Tweedledum and Tweedledee. They live in a wood, and are two funny little men, short, fat, and broad. They are upon the best of terms with one another, and go about with their arms round each other's necks, until Tweedledum finds out that Tweedledee has broken his "new rattle."

One of the pictures shows the temper Tweedledum gets into when he finds the broken rattle,—he is tearing his hair with rage, and Tweedledee is under a tree trying

to hide himself from his brother's anger by rolling himself up in a big umbrella. Alice is looking on very much frightened, and doing her best to smooth down Tweedledum, who, however, will not be satisfied until Tweedledee consents to have a fight. Then Alice is sent to fetch the things to dress them up for fighting,—Bolsters, blankets, hearth-rugs, table-cloths, dish-covers, coal-scuttles, and for helmets—saucepans!

It is the picture of this that Val is studying, and it is the part of Alice—that of dressing them up—that Nannette has given to Ted and Connie.

"Let us begin at once," says Val briskly.

"First we will see what we shall want," answers Nannette, looking over his shoulder, "and then Ted and Connie can begin getting them at once."

Ted, who has not even been consulted, tumbles out of his arm-chair, and stands ready for orders.

Nannette reads,—"Bolsters, blankets, hearth-rugs, table-cloths, dish-covers, and coal-scuttles."

"All the short pillows you can lay hands on," says Nannette, and Ted and Connie disappear.

They return speedily, laden with short pillows, which they deposit on the floor.

"Blankets next," says Nannette, "you and I may as well help them, Val, we can't do much until we have collected all the things."

The floor is soon covered with the articles needful for their purpose. Connie appears from somewhere, a black smudge across one cheek, and laden with a coal-scuttle. Nannette pauses to consider.

"Tweedledum has a saucepan for a helmet," she says, looking thoughtfully down at the open book, while Connie stands expectant with the coal-scuttle weighing down her thin arms, "and Tweedledee has a coal-scuttle,"—Connie lifts it up,—"Yes, I see, Connie, put it down. Do you know, Val, I am afraid you will find that coal-scuttle much too large for you; you see you are not nearly so big as Tweedledee, so perhaps you had better have a saucepan instead."

But Val looks wistfully at the coal-scuttle.

"I think I can manage," he says, "it would be so jolly to have a coal-scuttle on one's head."

"I know it would," assents Nannette, "but your head is so very small, Val, and you would be buried in it, and would not be able to see to fight, and after all a saucepan is almost as jolly."

Val gives in.

"We have not got the saucepans yet," suggests Ted.

"We will go on with the dressing up," says Nannie, "the saucepans won't be wanted until the last."

"But you must act the part before the dressing up," says Ted, "where they have the quarrel, you know."

"I forgot that," answers Nannette, "and we want an umbrella. Oh, Connie, fetch Nurse's big green cotton umbrella from the nursery cupboard."

Connie returns with the report that Nurse asked what they wanted it for, and she said, "To play with," and Nurse said, "Mind you are *very* careful over it, Miss Connie, I give it into your charge."

This account causes so much laughter, that it is some time before they are sober enough to begin their acting. Nurse's umbrella is a large-sized carriage umbrella of the stoutest twill calico, with a strong iron frame, and thick wooden stick and handle. It was made in the good old days when umbrellas wore better than they do now, and it would be almost impossible to spoil this, unless one used force to do so. It was taken out by Nurse with great pride on wet or doubtful days to shelter her from rain, on fair days as a protection from the sun.

When the children have had out their laugh, the great green umbrella is unfurled, and the game begins. Next comes the dressing up, and here Ted and Connie have plenty to do. First Nannette and Val are encased in blankets, which leave their heads and arms free, otherwise they look like mummies; the table-cloths are more for ornament, they form an elegant flowing drapery, trailing on the ground; then a couple of hearth-rugs are tied round with whip-cord; the short pillows are now brought into use, four for each, tightly fastened on by means of skipping-ropes, all the whip-cord having been used up. Nothing now remains but the dishcovers and tea-trays for shields, and the saucepans for helmets.

"Oh," gasps Nannette, "how hot it is. I don't know how Tweedledum and Tweedledee felt, but I can only just stand."

"It is hot," says Val, puffing; "now for the saucepans. Make haste back, you two."

"And don't forget the dish-covers," suggests Nannette, "and tea-trays."

Ted looks doubtful.

"There's Cook, Nannie," he says, "you forgot her; and even if she isn't in the kitchen, some of the others will be sure to be there."

"Oh you must manage, Ted," pleads Nannette, "we can't do without the saucepans, and now we've got so far it would be such a pity to give it up."

"We'll try at any rate," says Ted, "come along, Connie."

"Fortune favours the brave," it is said, and certainly it does favour Ted and Connie to-day. There is no one in the kitchen, not a sign of any living creature, except the cat, in the kitchen, back kitchen, or scullery. Ted and Connie fly about as noiselessly as they can, seize upon all the saucepans they can find, and run off with them, making several journeys until they have collected what they require.

Stuart, who has been in solitary grandeur in his attic at the top of the house, now feels that he should like a little more company than his own thoughts; so he descends to the schoolroom, filled with the lofty ideas of cheering up the others, and rousing them from the depression into which they have fallen.

Before he reaches the schoolroom cheerful sounds meet him, and quickening his footsteps, he opens the door. A very different scene to the one he left is now before him. Then, the rain dropped ceaselessly from dark, grey, murky clouds,-dropped upon the tender green shoots just bursting from lifeless-looking boughs and trees. Inside the room the fire had sunk down to a bed of black coal and smouldering ashes, everybody too much occupied in bewailing the weather to have any energy left to stir it into a blaze again; Val, discontented and miserable, pressed his snub nose against the dreary window-pane; Nannette listlessly tilted herself upon her chair; Laura and Ted pursued their occupations silently; Connie sat idle, her fair placid face turned in the direction of Val's eyes, as if looking at the weather made it any better.

Now, it is raining just as fast, the skies are just as hopelessly grey, but the schoolroom is as different as it is possible for the same room to be.

Connie, when she fetched the coal-scuttle, emptied its contents of wood and coal upon the fire as the easiest way of getting rid of them, and the result is a roaring fire half-way up the chimney. Upon Laura's table, tidy precise Laura's, stands a goodly array of saucepans of all sizes, some, black common saucepans, others, more delicately made and enamelled inside; the floor is covered

with blankets and short pillows, and in the midst are Nannette and Val just having the finishing touches put to their toilette in the shape of tea-trays which Ted and Connie are, with difficulty, tying on.

Stuart's eyes brighten, "I say, what fun," he cries, "why didn't you call me down?"

"We thought you were busy," says Nannette, demurely, "now for the saucepans, Val."

The saucepans prove tiresome to manage. Ted and Connie not being able to guess the size brought all they could find, feeling that some of them *must* fit, but before the proper ones are selected the family of Grays resemble a band of Christy Minstrels. Nannette and Val have their faces adorned by huge patches of black, and every pair of hands is grimy.

The Grays' schoolroom is upon the ground floor, shut off by green baize doors, and at the end of the passage into which it opens are the kitchens and other offices, so that Ted and Connie had not far to go to forage.

When the fun is at its height sounds of wailing are heard from the kitchen. The noise is hushed in a moment, Stuart opens the door and steals out into the passage, the others following on tip-toe. The backdoor is open, and Cook and Anna Maria, the parlour maid, are standing at it talking—by peeping round the corner their backs can just be seen.

"Anna Maria," Cook is saying in a solemn voice,

"didn't you hear me say that that there man what came here a-begging this afternoon was up to no good?"

"Yes, Cook, I did," answers Anna Maria.

"Then let it be a warning to you never to trust to appearances," continues Cook in an imposing manner: "I knew that man was an impostor the very minute I set eyes on him."

"What man is that, Cook?" asks a man's voice, and the clatter of hob-nailed boots is heard to stop at the back door.

"Why," answers Cook, snappishly: "who should it be but that very man what you said was a deserving unfortunate creature? And there I went and gave him as good a dinner, ay, a dinner fit for a—a—for the honestest man that ever lived," and in her agitation Cook's voice is raised to its highest pitch.

The man addressed answers stoutly,

"Well, and so he is. As honest a man as ever you'll find, I'll vouch my word for that."

Cook gives a sniff of disdain, a sniff so loud that it reaches the ears of the delighted young people whose interest in this conversation is great.

There is a moment's silence, then Cook gives another sniff.

"Pretty honesty!" she says, bitterly; then waits to be questioned further.

"Well, what's the matter?" inquires the man at last.
"There you go, giving out of hints, and taking away

a man's character with never the boldness to speak out."

"Oh, I'll speak out, Simon, fast enough," says Cook, thoroughly roused as Simon meant she should be. "What do you say to all my saucepans having gone! Saucepans can't walk themselves off without legs, can they? And there's never so much as the ghost of a saucepan to be found about the place! There, what do you think of that? That's pretty well for an honest man, ain't it? A nice afternoon's work for an honest man? and, dear heart alive, there's half-past five a-striking, and never a vegetable a-boiling for Master's dinner," and Cook breaks off with a laugh that sounds very hysterical.

But, strange to say, Simon does not give Cook the sympathy she expects; on the contrary, he laughs—a low chuckling laugh.

"Bless us, Cook," he says; "I should look much nearer home for the saucepans if I was you."

"What do you mean?" asks Cook indignantly, while the children are treading on each other's toes in perfect ecstasy.

"Mean? oh, nothing," answers Simon indifferently. "Only, a few days ago, all my gardening tools walked themselves off. Well, they haven't legs no more than your saucepans have. But I didn't go for accusing an honest man, oh, no! I knew where the cap fitted. Rather nearer home than that, oh, yes, much nearer home."

"Did you get your tools back again, Simon?" inquires Anna Maria, thinking that to get the saucepans back is the most to the purpose just now.

"Oh, yes, I got 'em back," says Simon, chuckling, "I got 'em back."

"How?" asks Cook, eagerly.

"Well," says Simon, slowly, "I made them as took 'em away bring 'em back again."

"But how did you find out who took them?" inquires Cook, pettishly, "that's what I want to know."

"Ah," says Simon, mysteriously; and he says no more, for the children hear his boots clatter down the flagged pathway. Still no idea of the truth breaks upon Cook and Anna Maria.

"I wish Simon wouldn't be so teasing, but speak straight out," says Cook, crossly. "What could he mean, Anna Maria? There's that Magpie of Master Stuart's, he's powerful mischievous; do you think he could have made off with they saucepans?"

Cook asks the question quite seriously, and the notion of Jacky walking off with a dozen or more saucepans is so absurd that the laughter which the children have hitherto smothered now bursts forth loudly.

It reaches the ears of Cook and Anna Maria, startling them, and evidently, even to their dense minds, throwing some light upon the mystery, and the children finding they have betrayed themselves rush back into their room. They are quite wild with excitement and ready for anything now.

"Let us barricade the door," suggests Val, and Nannette, acting on the suggestion, tries, dressed up as she is, to push the large table towards the door.

"Stay," says Ted, soberly, "there is Father's dinner."

"You are always such a wet blanket, Ted," says Nannette, pouting. "Why need you remind one of that? Let us enjoy ourselves and have some fun."

There is a knock, and before anybody says "Come in," Cook opens the door, and admits herself and Anna Maria.

The scene that meets their eyes quite takes away their breath, and the children enjoy Cook's expression as she stands round-eyed and open-mouthed gazing before her. Anna Maria's expression is the counterpart of Cook's.

"Well," says Cook, finding words at last, "I never did."

"Oh, no, you didn't," says Stuart. "We will take the blame. Cook, don't be afraid."

"And, oh, Cook," cries Nannette, "was it the man who walked off with the saucepans? Or was it Jacky, poor Jacky?"

And again the idea of Jacky walking off with the saucepans presents such a ludicrous picture to the children's minds, that it causes fresh shrieks of laughter, and mirth is so catching, that Cook and Anna Maria find themselves, instead of scolding, joining in it.

The merriment is so boisterous at that length it brings Nurse from upstairs, and the horrified Laura from the study, but even these two find they can do very little; the children are just as excited as they were, but an hour back, depressed. The authorities, however, insist that the things are put away by those who brought them out. Father's dinner is delayed for half-an-hour, and the cause explained to him.

"Well," says Nannette, as she brushes out her lion's mane, as they all call her thick rippling fall of hair, "for a wet afternoon I do think this is the jolliest I ever spent."

And flaxen-haired Constance, waiting for Nannette to fasten her frock, answers enthusiastically,

"Yes."



CHAPTER II.

THE MILLER'S POND.

THE Grays' Mother died when Violet, who is three years old, was born, and since her death Mr. Gray has devoted himself entirely to his children. The boys learn of him, though Stuart is soon to be sent to school, and all have meals together, even Violet now sits in her chair at Father's right hand. Father has luncheon at the one o'clock dinner, and when the children have tea, he has dinner at the other end of the long table. Laura is fifteen, indeed not far from sixteen, Stuart is fourteen, Nannette twelve, Ted eleven, Val ten, and Connie only seven years old.

Lessons are over for the day for both boys and girls, who are now gathered in the schoolroom to discuss how the afternoon shall be spent. There are no clouds over the sky, no rain is pattering down, but there are clouds indoors, at least if we may judge by the expression of

the faces,—clouds which, if not dispersed, will probably break into a storm.

"It is *very* unkind of you," Nannette is saying with a frown upon her usually good-tempered face.

"So ill-natured too," chimes in Val.

"We all want it so much," this is from Connie.

"Now, little whipper-snapper," says Stuart, turning sharply round upon Connie, "you just shut up, no one asked you to interfere. Your elders know what is best for you. Little girls should be seen and *not* heard."

Connie shuffles her feet about and looks uncomfortable, Nannette takes up the cudgels for her.

"Connie has just as much right to interfere as anybody, Stuart. Never mind, Connie, don't you be sat upon."

"Nobody wants to sit upon her," says Laura, "but we do want to prevent her growing up such a Tomboy as you, Nannie."

Now it is Val's turn to fire up in defence of his chum.

"Nannie is no Tomboy, but a downright jolly sort of girl. One Mother Fidget in a family is quite enough," he says.

A sound is heard in the passage as of something scraping along the floor, then footsteps, and a voice says,

"Oh, Miss Violet, Miss Violet, when will you learn that little ladies *never crawl*, they *always walk?* There, go along, dearie, and be a little lady again."

The footsteps die away in the distance, the scraping

recommences, the half-opened door is pushed back, and Violet crawls in on her hands and feet.

Such a Ball o' Fat, as every one calls her, and no wonder she finds it more comfortable to crawl, than to walk like a "little lady" upon her two plump legs. She "might grow up pretty," as Val remarked, but at present the only other things noticeable in her are,—a pair of scarlet cheeks, and a quantity of dark fluffy hair that stands up round her head like a crown, and that no amount of brushing will make lie flat.

"Oh, you dear little Lump," cries Nannette, rushing to her, "how naughty of you not to walk like 'a little lady' when Nurse told you. Come and play with Kitty. See!" and Nannette puts her among the sofa-cushions and gives her the little tortoiseshell kitten to be petted and stroked.

"Well," says Val, bringing them back to the subject in hand, "what do you mean to do?"

"Oh," answers Nannette, the frown that Violet had for the minute chased away returning to her face, "I suppose we must give it up; Father will not let us go so far without the elders."

"It is not far," begins Val.

"What nonsense you talk, Val," says Laura, "you know as well as I do that Beechley Dell is quite five miles from here."

"Four and a half," says Val stoutly, "not a step further."

"Laura is right," says Stuart, "it is five miles from here."

"Of course," replies Nannette, "dear Mother Fidget always is right with you, Stuart; it is only us poor unfortunates who are ever in the wrong."

"What is the matter? who is in the wrong?" asks Teddy, coming in at that moment.

Nannette eagerly lays the question before him. It is such a lovely day, the blue-bells are certain to be out in Beechley Dell, and they—Val, Connie, and herself—have made up their minds to go. There is plenty of time to get there and back before tea, only—Stuart and Laura say they won't come.

"Can't," corrects Laura, "not won't. Do be truthful, Nannie."

"It is won't," shout Val and Nannette together, "you could come if you liked," and Val adds, "Where there's a will there's a way."

A heavy thud as of something falling makes them all look round. Violet has rolled off the sofa upon the floor, where she lies upon her back. She is too fat to get up without help, so she lies still, saying placidly but decidedly,

"Pick me up."

There is a general laugh and rush to the rescue. It is Violet's unconscious way of interfering in the family quarrels, and though the same thing happens many times, the result is always the same, a good deal of merriment and a rush to "pick her up."

When Violet is settled upon the sofa, and the excitement has subsided, Ted says,

"Never mind about Beechley Dell to-day, Nannie, there are blue-bells out much nearer than that."

"Where?" inquires Nannie eagerly, she seems to have set her heart upon blue-bells this afternoon.

"Come and see," says Ted, moving towards the door, "put on your things, and we can start at once."

Nannette and Connie are quite willing to go, but Val, his face cloudy, says obstinately,

"I've made up my mind to go to Beechley Dell, and I'll go. If Nannie and Connie won't go with me I'll go by myself."

"That you will not," says Laura, just as decided as Val is obstinate, "for if you attempt to go by yourself I shall tell Father, and he will stop you."

"So like a girl," retorts Val, "always tale-telling."

Ted is about to speak, but changes his mind, and runs off. He soon comes back. "Father wants us to take a message to the Miller's for him," he says. "You will like *that*, won't you, Val? for then we can go in and see the Mill at work. And I am almost sure I saw some blue-bells in the wood close by, Nannie."

Val struggles with his ill-temper for a moment, but Miller Dawes is even a greater treat than Beechley Dell, the obstacles in the way of the latter being really the great attraction, and his face clears visibly as he answers, "Be quick, girls, don't take an hour to get ready. There is a good piece of the afternoon gone now."

"Wasted in quarrelling," says Laura aggravatingly, "I wonder you did not think of that before."

"Come and fetch Rags and Tatters, Val," says Ted quickly, and before Val had time to retort to Laura's ill-timed speech.

Two years ago Ted had the scarlet fever. When he was in the tedious stage of recovery there was brought to him by train a small hamper, a present from one of his Uncles. With eager fingers Ted cut the string that tied down the hamper, and there rolled upon the floor two of the funniest little puppies ever seen.

They were a pair of pepper-and-salt Scotch Terriers, so much alike in every way that at first only Ted could tell them apart. But now, as he says, they are of such different characters that no one need be puzzled. Rags is the mischievous, and Tatters the steady one, but then wherever Rags leads, Tatters, out of devotion to his brother, always follows, and after all his steadiness is not of so much use to him as it ought to be, or as it would be if he took the lead.

Rags and Tatters passed their first stage of babyhood and grew up a pair of handsome puppies before a name was found for them. Ted was hard to please. None of the names he thought of himself, none of those suggested by others, took his fancy.

One day the puppies were enjoying their mid-day meal. Ted brought it as usual, put it down before them, and left them to enjoy it. The dinner was as always—
—vegetables and potatoes mashed with gravy, and a reserve of bones. The dogs ate up their mash and then turned their attention to the bones. Now up to this day the puppies had eaten their dinner as comfortably and amiably as a pair of well-bred puppies should, but to-day they both set their affections upon one particular bone. Why they did so has never been found out—perhaps it was a juicier bone, perhaps it had some marrow in it—anyway they snarled and growled over it most unbecomingly, and from snarling and growling the step to fighting is a very short one.

When Ted appeared upon the scene he was amazed and shocked. The two dogs were rolling on the ground, biting, growling, scratching, yelping. Little bits of fur were scattered plentifully about, and their faces could not be seen, so shrouded were they in the hair that was scratched over their eyes. In answer to Ted's call Simon came up, and as he surveyed the two panting, heaving, torn-to-pieces heaps before him, he exclaimed,

"Why, they ain't like dogs at all. They are nothing but Rags and Tatters."

"That is what I shall name them," cries Ted in delight, in the midst of the well-deserved thrashing the dogs are getting; "what a capital idea of yours, Simon. This one shall be Rags and this one Tatters."

So the dogs were well beaten and their bones taken away, even the juicy bone that caused such a sad display of temper. And whether it was the thrashing, or the loss of the bones, or whether they grew wiser with age, or it may have been all these reasons combined, but certainly from that time Rags and Tatters were the most devoted of brothers and have never quarrelled since. They are so fond of one another that though Tatters' steady mind and soberer spirits would lead him often to remain at home, yet wherever Rags' mischief and wildness take him, Tatters follows too. Ted's voice and Ted's whistle are the only voice and whistle Rags will obey.

This afternoon they are wild with delight at seeing their Master, and at the prospect of being let out. They have been shut up in the stables all the morning, for Rags has been in mischief again. He made his way into the flower-garden last evening, and enticed Tatters to a fine game of play over the borders, scratching up many seeds that had just been sown.

Simon did not consider the beating Ted gave them sufficient punishment, and he insisted they should be shut up for a whole morning in the stables. Now the hour of release has come, and the dogs can hardly make enough of it.

"Down, Rags, down," cries Val, as after whirling round and round, Rags nearly overturns him by the vehemence of his caresses. "What spirits you're in! I

say, Ted, better take the chain, because of the Miller's pigeons."

"Here it is," says Ted, appearing from the stable where he has been groping. "Look, there are the girls, let us start at once."

It is not often Ted goes for his walks attended by his brothers and sisters. Laura and Stuart cling together, being the two eldest. Nannette and Val have always been great chums, and Connie is their shadow and humble supporter. Thus Ted is left a good deal to himself, and it has become natural, no one knows why or wherefore, for all of them to have a certain contempt for Ted; it may be perhaps because he has so humble an opinion of himself. If anything disagreeable has to be done Ted is the one to do it; he is at everybody's beck and call, ready to do anything he is asked; the peacemaker, so far as he can be, in their numerous squabbles; and so accustomed to be put aside that it never occurs to him to be any slight at all. If nobody wants him he takes refuge with Rags and Tatters, and in their society forgets his loneliness.

They are a merry party this afternoon, and no traces of the storm remain. The mill is not working, but Val takes his disappointment calmly, there are so many other things to be seen and done. There are the baskets to be filled with flowers from the small plantation near, and Ted was right, for they find a few early blue-bells. Then there is the Miller's wife, who never lets them go

without paying her a visit, and who regales them with plum-cake and new milk. Then there are the new pigeons to be looked at and admired, for the Miller is a great pigeon-fancier, and generally has some new ones to show the children, Nannette's one ambition being to set up pigeons on her own account. Lastly Nannette and Val have placed their affections on some mud from a lovely slimy pond at the bottom of the Miller's meadow. They are sure that they shall discover there some small treasures for the schoolroom aquarium, and they march off armed with the can they have brought for the purpose. Connie is tired, and stays to talk with the Miller's wife, but Ted, knowing that Nannette and Val are no more to be trusted than a couple of babies, follows in their wake.

The mud proves so beautifully black and slimy, even beyond their expectations, and Nannette and Val give a yell of delight. Val goes down upon his hands and knees, and his hands are dabbling in the dark weedy water before Ted comes up with them.

"Eh, this is jolly mud," cries Val enthusiastically, scooping up a quantity as he speaks.

"Oh, Val, let me help," says Nannette, "you have all the fun."

"Nonsense, Nannie," says Val, roused for once to a sense of what is befitting his sister, "it isn't girl's work, you'd get yourself in no end of a mess, and be of no use. My trousers will want a good brush."

"I should think they would," says Ted. "I say, Val, you had better let me hold you, the sides are so moist and slippery."

For Val is maintaining his balance with difficulty, as the bank slopes rather suddenly and is slippery from recent rain.

But Val is proud. "Oh, I'm all right," he says. "There, Nannie, will that do? the can is nearly full."

"What lovely mud," says Nannette, peering into the can, "but oh! wait, Val, I see such a lovely lump,—no, further to your left; ah, now your hand is close to it."

Val reaches forward securely, just misses his balance, and tumbles face downwards into the dirty water. Nannette and Ted make a dash at his legs and pull him out, and fond as Val is of grubbing, he has enough of dirt for one while. He had the sense to keep his mouth and eyes shut, but the mud is lazily making its way down his face, is plastering his scanty yellow locks, is encasing his shoulders, and is covering his trousers.

Nannette and Ted break into peals of laughter,—laughter that increases the longer they gaze at Val. At the best of times he is by no means good-looking, but now he is something too absurd. His small, fair, round face and head are plastered with the "lovely" black mud sluggishly trickling down; his little light Chinese eyes are screwed up tight; his button-hole mouth, with its turned-up corners, is firmly compressed; his snub nose is nowhere visible from its black surroundings; his arms



PAGE 30.



hang straight down, his hands still grasping the "lovely lump" after which he made the final dive. Val would like to protest, but he dares not open mouth or eyes for fear of the mud getting in, and he has to bear in silence the peals of laughter at the object he has made of himself.

"Oh, Val," says Nannette, when she recovers speech, "I must fish out your hat, it is floating slowly away. There, now it is caught on a weed, how lucky I brought my umbrella!"

Ted turns his attention to Val, who certainly looks anything but comfortable in his new clothing.

"We can't do anything to get off the mud, Val," he says, "it is such thick stuff. Run quick to the Miller's, and there you can have a good wash."

Val obeys at a quick trot, Nannette and Ted follow more leisurely, every now and then breaking into little shreds of laughter, and Nannette with Val's straw hat upon her umbrella, carried well in front of her, and mud dripping from it at every step.

Val's appearance at the mill creates much mirth. The Miller and his wife, out of politeness, restrain theirs as long as they can, but soon join the general laugh. Val is provided with a sponge, a big piece of yellow soap, a couple of rough towels, and as much water as he requires.

He scrubs and washes, and washes and scrubs, until his face and head feel quite sore, and Nannette declares he will scrub his skin off. When he has quite finished, his head and face and hands are clean, and the general opinion is, that that is the most that he can hope for at present, and that his clothes must wait until the mud has dried upon them.

"Connie," says Nannette, as they retrace their steps, a dirtier and we may hope a wiser party, "you must walk first to save the credit of the family. If we meet any one they will see by you that when we are what we *ought* to be we are really respectable and clean."

"That is wise of you, Nannie," says Ted, "listen, there is a carriage coming."

"It's a fly," says Val, whose eyes, if small, are sharp as a needle, and who has been peering down the lane; "I believe it's one of the Black Lion's flies, but I can't tell just yet."

"Then you had better go behind now, Connie," says Nannette, "as the fly is coming this way, and whoever is in it will see you first, and we will get as close as we can to the hedge, and perhaps we shall not be looked at."

"That is a vain hope, Nannie," says Ted, for Nannette is a tall bonny girl with a bright freckled complexion, and great waves of rippling red hair. Nannette's hair is the plague of Laura's life, she is always trying to make it lie in smooth plaits round Nannette's large head. But as soon as Nannette escapes from Laura's tidying hands, she shakes out her lion's mane again, and it is soon as untidy as ever

"Val," says Nannette, "you are much the worst, go in the middle."

"It is no good," says Ted resignedly, "we can't be hidden, and whoever is in the fly will only think we have hired ourselves out for a day's hedging and ditching."

"And Val for dragging a pond," laughs Nannette,—
"oh, I don't mind a bit, only we shall get such a rowing from those two respectable elders, and if they find out we have been seen by anybody, they will be most dread-fully shocked."

"Let them," cries Val, "I don't care."

"Nor do I," says Nannette, "but I hate being nagged at from morning till night, and we shan't hear the last of this for days. There is nothing so worries Mother Fidget as people seeing us 'scrambling home like a set of ragamuffins,' as Stuart said the other day, and I am sure we were beautiful then to what we are now."

The lane is stony and rutty, and the fly passes them slowly. They get a good view of the grey-haired, grey-moustached gentleman, who in return surveys them leisurely. Connie, pushed by the others, puts herself forward as much as she can, but the gentleman hardly glances at her, he is so intent on scanning the others from head to foot. Not a detail escapes him. Val, clothed in mud, his mud-covered hat slung upon Nannette's umbrella, and carried over his shoulder, leaving uncovered his small yellow head; Nannette, her hair

fluffy and untidy, her hat pushed in her excitement considerably on one side, her boots ancle-deep in the same black mud with which Val is clothed, large patches of it upon portions of her dress and jacket; Ted also bearing traces of the slimy stuff upon his jacket and trousers, for both he and Nannette came in for a large share of Val's mud when they helped him out of the pond. The gentleman takes all this in, and the children see a broad and amused smile upon his face as he lays the newspaper upon his knees, leans back in the fly, and watches them until he is carried out of sight.

When he has passed out of hearing, Nannette exclaims,

"Well, for Laura's sake it is a comfort to think we shan't see him again."

"He grinned like a Cheshire cat," remarks Val crossly, who as a rule does not like being laughed at.

"Ted, look, look," screams Nannette, tip-toeing to get a better view over the hedge, "Rags has got into the field and is tearing after those poor sheep. There! now Tatters is following, naughty Tatters!"

Ted springs forward to the gate and whistles a peculiar whistle of his own for calling the dogs. Rags is careering at full speed, his ears floating back, his tail straight. Tatters is behind, following at a slower pace, as though under protest. They both hear the whistle, and pause at once in their gallop. Rags stands still, tucks his tail between his legs, and droops his ears over his face.

Tatters follows his example, and side by side the pair approach Ted, stop at the gate, and crouch down to receive the beating they know awaits them. Nannette and Connie, moved by the wistful look of Rags' bright, quick, brown eyes, beg hard that they may be let off their beating.

But Ted is wiser. "Rags must be cured of running after sheep," he says. "There, old boy, make it up."

Rags shakes himself, as though to shake off the indignity of the thrashing, then sits down upon his haunches and solemnly gives Ted the right paw. Tatters has not yet learned this accomplishment; in this as in other things his brother is far before him.

"Well," says Nannette resignedly, "we shall be late,—it must be nearly half-past six already."

"Let us time ourselves," says Ted, "and do the rest in ten minutes."

Arrived at home they slink round to the back door to escape the respectable elders. Anna Maria comes to meet them, Val crouches behind Nannette's broad back, where his small figure is well hidden, and Anna Maria is too excited, with the news of which she is the bearer, to take particular notice of the others.

"A gentleman has arrived unexpected," says Anna Maria imposingly. "Dinner is put off until seven, and you're to have your tea by yourselves in the schoolroom,—Miss Gray is helping Nurse get the spare room ready."

They all exchange amused glances, and from behind Nannette comes a stifled explosion of laughter. Fortunately Anna Maria has much to do, and as soon as she has imparted the news she returns to the house.

"Well," says Nannette with a groan, "isn't this unlucky? I hope we shan't have to see him."

"I dare say he is only come to see Father," says Ted, trying to be what he does not feel,—consoling, "and perhaps he won't even know of our existence. Any way we'll hope for the best."

Nannette's clothes are in a heap upon the floor, and she is just scrambling into a cleaner dress when Laura enters Nannette's and Connie's joint room.

"How late you are," she says reprovingly; "however it does not matter this evening, for you would only have been in the way. Colonel Pringle has come for a day or two; he is one of Father's oldest friends, and you must put on your white alpacas, because we are all to go into the drawing-room after dinner. We are to have tea in the schoolroom at seven, so make haste."

"Oh," groans Nannette, "those dreadful best dresses! Let me off mine, and let me wear my second best, Laura, please."

"Of course not," says Laura, "how childish you are! You are quite old enough to take care of your dresses, but you are like no one else, Nannie."

"That is just it," says poor Nannette, "and it is the extra care I take of my best dress that does the mis-

chief,—I am sure to upset the tea over it or something."

"I must go and make tea," says Laura resignedly, "do look after her, Connie, and see that she brushes her hair smoother, and that she is decently tidy."

Laura is in her element this evening, for being of importance, and having a good deal to think of and arrange, are Laura's greatest happiness. She is useful, steady, and sensible, but with no tact or sympathy, and she manages her brothers and sisters badly, always contriving to rub them the wrong way by her fidgetiness, want of sympathy, and what Nannette calls "nagging" at a thing. It has to be remembered, though, that she was only twelve when their Mother died, and since then her position has been the very one to foster her faults, unless she was, which she has not been, upon her guard against them. Mr. Gray has noticed this for some time, and has made arrangements with his sister, and Laura's namesake and godmother, to come and keep house for him. This has not been mentioned to the children yet, for it will be several months before Aunt Laura is able to come and take up her abode at Veramede.



CHAPTER III.

VAL'S CHOICE.

"LAURA is like a hen looking after her chickens," remarks Stuart, as he notices her anxious survey round the table.

"Cluck, cluck, cluck, "imitates Val.

"Henny-penny," begins Nannette.

"Goosey-poosey," continues Val.

But Laura is much too anxious to heed their nonsense. All the time she is having her tea her eyes are wandering over every one to see if they are looking their best, and to judge if she can what impression they are likely to make upon Colonel Pringle. To take them as they sit. Stuart is gentlemanly, but by no means handsome. Connie makes a passable appearance in her white dress and blue ribbons. Val as usual has a comically ugly look with his small round head and face, the former covered so scantily with yellow tufts of hair, his little

Chinese eyes, his snub nose, and button-hole mouth turned up at the corners. He is clean and neat in his dress,—so far he satisfies even Laura's critical gaze. Ted, but then Ted always appears to advantage; that, as the children say, is the use of being "the beauty,"—Ted's nickname in the family, and only quite lately dropped. Grubby or clean, dressed in homespun or velvets, coarse blouse or well-fitting garments, Ted, with his chestnut curls and dark blue eyes, is in either state irresistible. And yet how often has he himself wished he were as commonplace as Stuart, or as comically ugly as Val. Unfortunately for Ted, a lady was once overheard to say, "I have never seen such lovely eyes as Ted's, they are such a thrilling blue." This anecdote is stored in the family records, and whenever hard up for a joke, there is always Ted's "eyes of such a thrilling blue," to fall back upon.

This evening, however, Laura feels that his beauty is something to be proud of, and her eyes rest upon him with undisguised pleasure and satisfaction. Nannette is next to Ted, and to Laura's tidy mind she is nothing but a vexation. Ribbons that are fresh upon every one else appear crumpled upon Nannette; brush that lion's mane as hard and as long as you like, it is never smooth, never anything but a mass of untidy waves; her collar is usually crooked, and her dress tumbled and creased. Her bright straightforward expression that has a charm for most people, has none for Laura, who often sighs as she

thinks "how impossible it is to expect to make anything respectable of Nannie."

Laura clears her throat.

"Now for it," says Val, in a loud aside to Connie, "Children, or—no, that won't do, this is better—Brothers and Sisters, I must beg that you will mind your manners and—"

"Really," says Laura, in an anxious and, for her, conciliating tone, "I do wish you would be serious for a minute or two. Father will be so vexed if you behave badly. He told me that Colonel Pringle was his oldest friend, and that he valued his opinion so much. And Colonel Pringle has been accustomed—"

"To such well-behaved, such well-brought-up young people," edges in the not-to-be-put-down Val.

"Quiet, Val," says Nannette, reprovingly, though the dimples are coming into her cheeks, "don't interrupt."

"Oh, Nannie," says Laura despairingly, "I wish you did not look so much like—"

"A boiled lobster," suggests Val.

"How could you make yourself so hot?" says Laura, feeling that for once Val's simile may stand.

"Am I red?" asks Nannie, innocently.

"Behold yourself," answers Stuart, pointing to a long mirror between the two windows.

Nannette gets up and surveys herself leisurely. Her freckled complexion matches her hair in colour, even her forehead partakes of the general ruddy hue. "We rushed home," she says, "and I suppose the sun caught my face."

Laura sighs. "It is so unladylike to *rush*," she says, "and I saw that you took your umbrella on purpose that you should not get burnt. Why did you not put it up?"

"Oh," replies Nannette, with a wicked glance at Val, who pretends not to notice it, "coming home it was otherwise employed."

"Please, Miss Gray," says Anna Maria at the door, "Master says, if you please, he wants you all in the drawing-room."

So Laura has to finish hurriedly.

"Nannie, mind you don't talk loud or laugh, that horrid loud laugh, it is so unladylike. And Val, mind you are not impertinent. And, Connie, don't be too shy to answer when Colonel Pringle speaks to you."

"And to-day Stuart told her, little girls should be seen and not heard; oh, but it's a puzzling world," and Val makes a rush to catch up the others. Laura follows, not at all happy as to the behaviour of her wild and unmanageable chickens.

The entrance into the drawing-room is made successfully, Nannette does not even hook her dress in anything or stumble over a chair. Val gives her a nudge, but composes his face to a proper gravity for the introduction. Father names them according to age, and Colonel Pringle shakes hands with each. Though his mouth

does not smile there is a merry twinkle in his eyes which, to the initiated, shows that he recognises the walking party of the afternoon.

Father continues his conversation with his friend, and the others disperse about the room. Nannette pounces upon a large book of Natural History, where she is sure she has seen a picture of the new pigeons the Miller showed them to-day. They eagerly search, and Nannette forgetting the guest in her excitement over the discussion raises her voice louder than Laura likes, who, on thorns as to what may happen next, sends many a warning glance in the direction of the two heads so close together. The glances are unseen and unheeded.

Nannette is standing by the window later on, and Val is pointing out the gap left by a large bough, that the wind of a few days ago has wrenched off their favourite beech-tree, when a voice over their heads says,

"I hope you had a pleasant walk this afternoon?"

Nannette jumps, for she has not heard Colonel Pringle's step across the room, and turning round she blushes redder than she is already as she stammers,

"Yes...th...ank...y...ou."

Most of the eyes in the room turn towards Nannette, and most of the ears are strained to hear her answers.

"Had you been far when I saw you?" pursues Colonel Pringle.

Ted, Val, and Connie, enjoy the amazement upon the faces of the two elders, so would Nannette, only she is

feeling so confused, for the twinkle of amusement is deepening in Colonel Pringle's eyes as he recalls the figures he saw trudging home.

"Not very far," mumbles Nannette, twirling her fingers, and raising her shoulders, until Laura longs to shake her. Then, plucking up her courage, which is usually pretty good, she tosses back her lion's mane and continues straightforwardly and brightly, "We had been to Miller Dawes with a message from Father, it is about a mile and a half from here."

"I did not know you had seen any of them before," says Father, coming forward, and laying down the "Times."

"I passed four of them as I was coming here in the fly," says Colonel Pringle. "They were laden with flowers."

"Laden with mud," mutters Val from behind Nannette, and Colonel Pringle evidently hears, for he smiles, though he is too discreet to say anything.

Nannette soon finds herself talking quite easily and unreservedly to Colonel Pringle, and telling him all about the Miller's pigeons. Indeed to all of them the evening is a pleasanter one than they expected Nannette when she goes to bed has even the satisfaction of taking off her dress without tear or stain, though she does not escape a lecture from Laura upon her loud talking.

"I forget, Laura," says Nannette, who is tired and longing for bed, "I really do."

"It is so thoughtless of you to forget, I am sure I tell you times enough."

"Yes, you do," sighs Nannette, "but one can't help forgetting when one gets interested in what one is saying."

"Well," says Laura, "perhaps when you are quite old you will improve. I don't see any chance of it now," and to Nannette's and Connie's great relief, Laura retires.

The next afternoon Nannette spends at home alone. Laura has carried off Connie to see an old lady in the village, Nannette, who hates paying visits, having refused to go. All the others have gone by train to a town some little distance from Veramede, and are not expected home before six.

Long before half-past five Nannette is dressed and waiting, straining ears and eyes to catch the faintest sign of the arrivals. To-morrow is Father's birthday, and while Father and Colonel Pringle are engrossed by the beauties of the Cathedral, the boys are to purchase their own and the stay-at-home's presents. Laura and Stuart have clubbed together, and Nannette, Val, and Connie; and Nannette is in the greatest state of excitement to see what Val has chosen for their joint present.

As she has got ready so much too soon she has long to wait, and the time passes all the more slowly because she spends it in wandering aimlessly about. "A watched pot never boils," she repeats to herself, and her patience is nearly exhausted when she sees the brown-holland dresses of Laura and Connie moving through the trees.

"What a long visit you have paid to Mrs. Strange," she says. "Aren't they late, Laura? I have been looking for them this age."

Laura takes out her watch. "Oh no, not late," she replies, "it is not quite time for them to come. What made you dress so early, Nannie? we are not going to have tea until a quarter to seven, you know."

"Yes, I know," says Nannette, "but I wanted to be dressed before they come home, because I can take my time and talk to Val then. Besides I really hadn't anything else to do."

Laura lifts her eyebrows. Nannette is a bad hand at employing herself.

"You are sure to tear your dress, or soil it, if you go rushing about with Val."

"Oh," says Nannette drearily, "I do wish there never was a best dress in the whole wide world."

"Sackcloth is the only thing to dress you in," says Laura, as she straightens Nannette's sash, pulls out her ribbons, and tidies her frill which is tucked in. "There, now you look a little better, you never will look well. Connie, you must come in and rest, you have been out so long in the sun."

Laura and Connie take themselves off. The glad noise of wheels is heard, and the two gentlemen drive up the avenue in the dog-cart. Nannette greets them, then runs down to stand at the gate and watch for the slow movements of the fly containing the boys.

It comes at last, even though it is a "watched pot." Val's head is poked out of the window, and when he sees Nannette waiting, he stops the fly, and the three boys get out.

Stuart is tranquil and composed. Ted gives Nannette an amused but pitying glance out of his dark blue eyes, and then whistles his way along the avenue. Val is the last; there is a solemn, mysterious look upon his comical face, making it all the more comical from contrast. His pockets bulge out on either side, filled with two large parcels, as can be told by the folds of paper showing. Nannette is much impressed by his appearance.

"Oh, Val, what *have* you got?" she asks, standing on tiptoe, and then giving a little skip to work off some of her excitement.

Val purses up his lips. "Wait and see," is all the answer she gets.

"Come to the summer-house," says Nannette quickly, and drawing him forward. "No one will disturb us there, and we don't have tea until a quarter to seven, so we've plenty of time,—I got ready beforehand on purpose."

Outside the summer-house Jacky is hopping, tied by a long chain to a pole, for he is so mischievous that Stuart does not let him be at large unless there is some one at liberty to devote their whole time to seeing after him, this close vigilance being much resented by the cunning bird, who tries in every way to elude it,—sometimes successfully. To-day Nannette and Val are too much engaged to remember to bestow their usual greeting upon Jacky, and offended and annoyed by the insult Jacky instantly resents it by standing on one leg and ruffling his feathers. There is a wicked look in his round black eye as he watches the unconscious Nannette and Val, as if he would say,

"I'll pay you out for this if ever I get a chance."

"Now, Val," says Nannette, as they mount the flight of steps leading into the summer-house, and seat themselves upon the topmost one, "show me what you have brought, I am so anxious to see it."

"Don't be in such a hurry," returns Val, "I assure you it was very difficult to choose, and Stuart would keep bothering and telling me we should be late, and no end of bosh. That fellow is getting a regular plague, quite a second Mother Fidget."

"But the present, Val," pleads Nannette, "what about the present?"

"All in good time," says Val. "Well, then, the first shop we went into was a stationer's shop, where Stuart wanted to get his and Laura's present."

"What did he get?" asks Nannette, seeing it is best to humour Val.

"An inkstand," answers Val.

"What a stupid thing," says Nannette, "just what one could expect precise Laura and Stuart giving."

"Very stupid," says Val complacently; "not half so nice as ours."

"But what is ours?" cries Nannette, "oh, Val, be quick and let me see it."

"All in good time," replies Val unmoved. "I looked about that shop, and I couldn't see anything I liked, there were lots of paper-knives, pen-wipers, and penholders, but I didn't think you would like anything of that sort?"

"Of course not," says Nannette, "those would be stupider than an inkstand, for the inkstand in Father's study is very shabby."

" Well, the next shop we went into," continues Val, "was a photograph shop, where Ted went to get his present."

"What did Ted get?" asked Nannette, with a sigh.

"Oh, some stupid photograph, mounted and framed," says Val, turning up his already too-much-turned-up nose. "I knew you would not care for a photograph, Nannie?"

"No," answers Nannette doubtfully, "not unless it had been a very pretty one. Father is fond of pictures, but still I dare say what you have chosen is *much* better. What is it, Val? now"—very insinuatingly—" do show me."

But Val is quite above being coaxed, and proceeds,

"The next shop we went into-"

"It sounds," murmurs Nannette, "like that riddle, 'Then I went up another flight of stairs.'"

"Don't interrupt," says Val. "Well, the next shop we went into was a gun-maker's."

"And what did you do there?" says Nannette eagerly, thinking that at last she has got to the kernel of the many-rinded nut.

"We-came-out-again," answers Val calmly.

"Without buying anything?" asks Nannette disappointedly.

"Of course not," retorts Val, "I had not enough money for a gun, you know."

"And Father has a lot of guns," says Nannette, "and he would not care for another."

"Well, I didn't buy one," says Val crossly; "you needn't go on as though I did."

"Go on, Val," says Nannette, taking her snubbing meekly.

Val is pacified and continues. "The next shop we went into was a—well, a shop of all sorts, what do you call that sort of thing, Nannie?"

"A bazaar?" suggests Nannette.

"A bazaar," continues Val, "that's it. There were such lots of things there, and I think if I went round that place once I went round it twenty times."

"No wonder Stuart was impatient," says Nannette.

"He needn't have bothered," says Val, "I didn't

bother him when he was choosing his inkstand. There were so many things that the difficulty was to fix upon *something*, but I settled at last upon *the* very thing."

The kernel at last! Nannette learning by experience that the only way of attaining the end is—to wait, and therefore wisely saying nothing.

Val slowly draws a parcel from his pocket, slowly unties—not cuts as usual—the string, slowly, very slowly, slower still unfolds several paper wrappings, and then, slowest of all, the silver paper and cotton wool are carefully put aside, and Nannette's eager, astonished gaze rests upon—

A stuffed Parrot!!!

Amazement, indignation, take away poor Nannette's breath. She might have known better than to trust to Val's taste, but she did not. It never entered her head that he *could* choose anything so useless, so glaringly vulgar as the stuffed parrot now before her, lying in its paper wrappers. Val probably thinks she is speechless from admiration, for he lays the bird upon her lap, and while he is undoing with equal care the strings of the other parcel he says,

"Father is so fond of birds, Nannie."

"Yes," says Nannette, finding voice, but a great lump in her throat nearly choking her; "he is fond of his aviary."

"Yes," continues Val, still too much absorbed to

notice Nannette's change of tone, "and there is that case of birds in the hall."

"The humming-birds Uncle Fred sent him from abroad," says Nannette. "I think he likes those so much for Uncle Fred's sake. They were the last thing he sent Father before he died."

"Then he can put these under a glass case and keep them for *our* sakes," says Val complacently, too much engrossed to pay much attention to anything Nannette says.

Nannette's heart sinks lower. Val's first choice has not led her to expect much from him, but still she is hardly prepared for what the other parcel discloses, and that is—

A stuffed Cockatoo!!!

"It's the pair of 'em," says Val, stroking down with pride the gay feathers. "Don't they match nicely, Nannie? and I got them quite cheap considering what they are worth."

Nannette has never been so near a quarrel with her favourite brother, and had he been any one but Val she had been in a rage long ago. As it is she has great difficulty in keeping the shower of passionate words that would rise to her lips. The thought however that it is Val, and that he really has tried to please her, causes her to make an effort and answer,

"I am afraid you had a great deal of trouble, Val."

"Never mind the trouble," says Val, so dense and so

full of admiration of his purchases that he does not miss Nannette's enthusiasm. "They are beauties, aren't they? and so cheap; the woman said they were worth just double, only that she was going to give up selling birds, and that that was why she sold them so cheap to me."

"The old cheat," mutters Nannette to herself, for she feels sure that the price Val has paid is about double their real worth.

A slight flutter close by attracts her notice, and looking round she sees that Jacky has hopped upon the step upon which they are seated, and is by her side gazing silently, stealthily, his neck stretched out, at the gaudy creature lying in Nannette's lap. Nannette gently touches Val's arm to engage his attention, and Jacky's round black eye is so full of evil purpose, so wickedly cunning, that they both burst out laughing.

Jacky, more offended by the laugh than even by their neglect of him, hops away to the length of his chain, not without a parting vicious glance at Val. For Jacky feels that he is a greater offender than Nannette, as he was the one who brought the gay feathered birds to mock by their contrast his sober black and white suit. Jacky is, as we have seen, not blind, and he watched with intense interest the unfolding of the parcels that came out of Val's pockets. Moreover Jacky is a bird with brains, and can put two and two together.

The laugh does Nannette good, and it rouses them both to a sense of the near approach of tea, and that

Val has yet to "have a wash," as he terms his ablutions.

Nannette hands him the parrot. "You pack them," she says hurriedly, and before he can object she gathers up her frock and jumps the flight of steps.

A sound with which she is only too familiar causes a dismayed expression from her, and a long whistle from Val. Her dress was caught in a nail in the woodwork of the summer-house, and the result of her jump is a big rent in the best white alpaca!

"Well, it's done at last," says Nannette, with what sounds like a sigh of relief, "I've been expecting this ever since I first had the dress. Never mind me, Val, you hurry in, or else you'll be late; I'll pin this up and follow."

Halfway to the house Nannette meets Ted, who has been waiting to waylay her.

"We were all so sorry, Nannie," he says, his blue eyes speaking his sympathy, "but Val would buy those wretched birds; Stuart and I both tried to argue him out of them, but he wouldn't listen to us. Would you like to go shares with me in this photograph? And this is a little thing I picked up in a hurry at the last in case Connie might like it to give instead of her share in the birds."

Ted holds out a much-despised paper-knife,—a Swiss one, made of pretty light wood and delicately carved.

Nannette's eyes flash.

"No, thank you, Ted," she says, "perhaps Connie may like the knife, but I shall keep to Val's choice," and her pride satisfied by this outburst, she rushes off, gains her own room and has a good cry.

The photograph Ted has chosen is a great favourite of his, and long ago he made up his mind to get it for Father's birthday. It is called "Le Sommeil de l'Enfant Jésus." The Holy Child with such a fair, sweet, loving Face lies upon the ground asleep, surrounded by adoring angels. The photograph is nicely mounted and framed in a carved oak frame. It was a sacrifice Ted made when he said to himself that he would offer Nannette a share in his present, and now that his self-denial and sympathy are thus rudely repulsed, it requires a look at the beautiful Holy Child before the usual serenity comes back to him. There is some consolation in finding that Connie, who has been dismayed by the sight of the birds, accepts his paper-knife gratefully.

Nannette continues to carry matters with a high hand, and will allow no disparaging remarks upon Val's choice in her presence. Laura and Stuart marvel openly at her taste, or rather want of taste, but Val looks upon their abuse as jealousy of his choice, and his entire satisfaction in his parrot and cockatoo is more galling to Nannette than anything else.

The presents are laid upon Father's plate at breakfast the next morning. Nannette's face is like a peony, and she keeps her eyes steadfastly fixed upon her toast. Val, on the contrary, beams with pleasure as Father unfolds the many wrappings of the huge parcel directed,

"For Father, with Nannette's and Val's very best love."

Stuart and Laura bite their lips, Connie openly giggles, Ted looks out of the window.

Father brings out first the parrot, then the cockatoo, and stands them on the table before him. There is a dead silence, Nannette's head is bent so low that her lion's mane falls over and conceals her red, red face. Colonel Pringle holds the newspaper well in front of him, for the state of Val's pockets yesterday reveals something of the truth to him; like Jacky he is able to put two and two together. Father has to wait a minute before he can control his voice sufficiently to thank the givers of the stuffed birds. The denseness of Val is dreadful, he beams more and more.

"They'll look jolly," he insinuates, "one on each side of Uncle Fred's case."

"Yes, they can go there," says Father, much relieved to find he is not expected to have them in his study. "I'll order glass shades for them of Sims, or you can, if you are passing that way, Val."

"I'll order them," replies Val with alacrity.

Nannette's lips are firmly closed. No one knows what her loyalty to Val costs her.

Conversation does not flourish, there is a constraint over every one, except of course Val, who chatters enough for twenty. The staring glass eyes of those dreadful birds seem to put all of them out of countenance. Fortunately Violet rolls out of her nest of cushions on to the floor, demanding in her shrillest, most decided voice, "Pick me up."

And the rush and laughter are so great as to astonish even Lump of Delight herself. After this the ice is broken, and matters mend.

Val sallies forth directly after breakfast and orders the glass shades, which are, after all, never used for the intended purpose. Stuart must have been strangely careless over Jacky to-day, for late in the afternoon it is proved that his wicked black eye meant mischief. After long search he is found in the drawing-room, where the stuffed birds have been carried until the shades are ready for them. The cockatoo is a ghastly sight as he lies upon the table stripped of his feathers, which are scattered over the carpet in profusion. Jacky is hard at work upon the parrot, holding him down with his claws while he pecks out the feathers, those gay feathers, blue, scarlet, green. And Jacky, as he lets them fall from his beak, watches them slowly flutter to the ground with a chuckle of malicious delight.



CHAPTER IV.

TED'S PERPLEXITY.

COLONEL Pringle makes a longer stay at Veramede than he at first intended, and he would have stayed yet longer but that he is due for a visit elsewhere. Some weeks after his departure the children are surprised at receiving each of them a present. None are forgotten, but Nannette and Ted come in for the lion's share: Nannette's present being a pigeon-house, and six pretty pigeons to begin upon, and Ted's, a sturdy handsome Welch pony, with a letter to say that he answers to the name of Mischief.

It is well that the pony falls to Ted's lot, for, as Val remarks, "It is almost as good as though it had been sent to the whole family." Val might have said, "quite as good," for when either of them feel inclined for a ride it is always, "Oh, Ted, you won't want Mischief to-day, will you?" or, "You'll lend me Mischief this afternoon,

won't you?" They ask in an easy take-it-for-granted style as one who is sure of an answer beforehand. Of course Ted feels a pang or two as he sees his beloved Mischief canter off upon his short stout legs at a beautiful swinging canter, but Ted is a boy who never does things by halves; it is quite cheerfully he stands at the door to start the rider and wish him with his usual bright smile "A pleasant ride."

Nannette's pigeons make her wilder than ever, and are the cause of many visits to the Miller, Val's eagerness being hardly second to Nannette's. The two spend a good deal of time in pottering about a square enclosed courtyard at the back of the stable. Laura could cry with vexation, for Nannette is untidier and grubbier than ever. Laura reproves, protests, worries, and Nurse scolds and grumbles, but to no purpose. Wilful Nannie shrugs her shoulders and declares that she can't be always thinking of her clothes, and that there never was any one so unfortunate as she is. Laura in despair appeals to Father, and then learns that Aunt Laura will be coming to take up her abode with them in a couple of months' time. This news does not quite please Laura, who feels herself of too much importance to take a second place, when for three years she has been first. Perhaps it is this that causes her so often to fling Aunt Laura in the children's teeth when they do anything wrong, that Nannette and Val begin to look forward to her coming in dire dismay, and to speak of "that dreadful Aunt Laura," with long faces and bated breath, though they always end by saying, "Well, she *can't* worry *more* than Laura."

Meantime Father speaks seriously to Nannette about her wilful neglect of herself and total disregard to her elder sister's remonstrances. Nannette owns her faults, moans over her untidiness, which she declares must be "in her," promises to try and do better, but ends with, "Oh, Father, Laura is such a Mother Fidget, and one does hate being nagged at from morning till night."

Father dismisses her with a sigh. May be he is thinking that Laura needs as much improvement as even careless Nannie with her Tomboy ways.

The pigeons are enjoying their afternoon meal, and Jacky is excited and restless. The chorus of soft coos reaches his ever watchful ears until he is quite savage with rage. Jacky knows the hours at which the pigeons are fed as well as possible, and some time beforehand he begins to get uneasy. I am sorry to write it of so estimable a bird, but Jacky has lately shown how very jealous a magpie can be. Ted declares that there is a yellow hue stealing over his glossy black coat, and Stuart is greatly afraid he will die of a broken heart.

"Where are the others?" asks Val of Nannette as, their occupation over, they saunter into the garden.

"All gone," says Nannette. "Laura has taken Connie off somewhere, and, wonder of wonders! don't faint, my

dear boy, but Stuart invited Ted to go for a walk with him."

"And are they gone?" says Val, with an expressive whistle.

"Rather," answers Nannette; "they started an hour ago."

"Eh!" says Val, as an idea suddenly dawns upon him, "then I shall have Mischief and go for a ride; I thought Stuart wanted him."

"Oh, Val," says Nannette, reproachfully, "and leave me alone?"

"Well, then, what else is there to be done?" asks Val crossly, for he does not like giving up a ride.

"We might go on the common and ride in turns," suggests Nannette very diffidently.

"It's awfully slow," grumbles Val, "and only girl's work, but it is better than nothing. Let us fetch some bread and get Mischief in ourselves. I'll saddle him."

"Can you?" asks Nannette somewhat doubtfully.

"Of course I can," replies Val with scorn.

Meantime, Ted, quite as much surprised as the others at the unusual honour Stuart has done him, is wending his way over the hills. Stuart can be pleasant when he chooses, and this afternoon he proves a most agreeable companion, and Ted cannot help wishing that Stuart were always as pleasant. They have just agreed that it is time to be turning homewards when two boys appear in sight whose presence has a strange effect upon Stuart,

for he turns very white and leans against a tree. The boys come up to Stuart and speak to him in a familiar manner, as though anxious to proclaim that they are upon equal friendly terms with him. Ted recognizes in them the two sons of a farmer named Pitcher, who lives upon the outskirts of the village, and Ted now remembers that his Father once said what wild lads they were, and a great cause of grief to their parents.

"Ted," says Stuart, speaking in a low hoarse voice, unlike his usual supercilious tones, "will you leave me for a few minutes, please?"

Ted walks away as requested; his head in a whirl, and as he paces up and down he tries to believe that, though things *look* wrong, yet they may be all right; but then the odious familiar bearing of the two boys comes before him, and *that* said as plainly as words, "We are not strangers, Mr. Stuart, and we are not going to let you behave as though we were."

The interview is a long one; and when it is ended the Pitchers go off in one direction, and Stuart comes to meet Ted in the other. There is more colour in his face now, and an appearance of indifference in his manner, as he says, "I was sorry to keep you waiting, old boy, but those fellows wanted to speak to me. Ted," he stammers with a little nervous laugh, "I want you to do me a favour."

Ted does not speak.

"Will you?" asks Stuart again.

"If I can," answers Ted.

"How much money have you?" is Stuart's next question.

"Two pounds," replies Ted, wondering what Stuart asks that for. He is not long left in doubt.

"Will you lend it me for a time?"

"What do you want it for?" asks Ted quickly.

"That is none of your business" is on the tip of Stuart's tongue, but he restrains himself, and while he is thinking what to say Ted speaks again.

"I don't want to pry into your secrets, Stuart, but I am sure you want money for something connected with those two Pitchers. Oh, Stuart, those fellows are a bad lot; don't, oh don't, have anything to do with them."

In amazement Stuart turns upon Ted and meets such pleading in those dark blue eyes that he feels uncomfortable for the first time.

None of the children have troubled themselves to make out Ted or to understand what they sometimes call, when they bestow any thought upon him or his affairs, "Ted's queer ways," and Stuart is amazed at the change in his tone and bearing. He has always looked upon Ted as a poor mean-spirited chap, very goodnatured and easy-going, and always ready to give up his own wishes, or do anything to please anybody. He knew Ted was saving up his money for something, and he thought that when he asked for the loan of it, Ted would say "yes" at once, and bother him with no unpleasant

questions. Of course the unexpected appearance of the boys upon the scene made the task more difficult, still even then he said to himself, "It is only Ted, and any excuse will do for him." He never realized that the Ted he knew would show as a very different Ted if ever there came a time when good-nature clashed with principle. The change is now beginning to make itself felt.

Stuart is very angry. He has always had the whip-hand of Ted, and it is such an entirely new thing for him to find the tables turned and his conduct inquired into by a much-despised younger brother, that he is greatly inclined to haughtily turn away from the subject, resume his old superior tone, give up all idea of borrowing the money of Ted, and so completely quell him that he shall soon sink into the submissive younger brother of former times. Second thoughts show him that he cannot afford to do this, therefore pocketing his pride he says as calmly as he can,

"Yes, you are right, Ted. The money has something to do with those Pitchers. I've got into a scrape and I want you to help me."

"What sort of a scrape?" persists Ted.

Stuart bites his lips with rage. "I suppose I'm in for it," he says, "anyhow Ted is honourable and won't blab." Whereupon he tells Ted all.

The all is something like this, though we give it without the rose-coloured spectacles worn by Stuart in telling it. 64

Stuart made the acquaintance of the two boys when they were one afternoon amusing themselves with jumping a hurdle. Stuart standing by to watch them a minute was taunted that he could not do the same, and roused by their taunts he said to himself that there was no harm in showing the fellows that he could vault, though of course he knew perfectly well who they were, and the character they bore in the village. He took the hurdle lightly and easily, and his vanity, excited by their loud admiration, led him to show off other feats. Their flattery, and the differential tone they assumed were pleasing to him, and an acquaintance thus begun was easily continued, as the Pitchers often managed to waylay Stuart when he was alone. One day when Stuart was talking to them a heavy thunder-storm came on, and they persuaded him to shelter with them in the New Inn. Now this inn had lately set up a billiard-table, and the Pitchers boasted that here at least was one thing Stuart could not do. Stuart began as he had done at the vaulting, by looking on, and ended by attempting to play. The game being new to him, and he unskilful, he was unfortunate enough to cut the cloth of the billiard-table. The landlord declared the cloth was new, and that five pounds would barely pay him for it; Stuart protested he had not five pounds or nearly that, and that he must be allowed time to pay. The landlord, a surly man, most unlike the respectable and respectful landlord of the old-fashioned "Black Lion," said he could not afford to wait, and that if the young gentleman did not pay up, he should send to Mr. Gray for the money. At this crisis the Pitchers came forward and offered to advance the money, and Stuart, longing to get out of the scrape, accepted the loan. Now the Pitchers wanted the money returned to pay a debt pressing upon them, and Stuart is in despair as to how to get it, winding up by saying,

"Now, Ted, be a good fellow and lend me the two pounds, and I'll do the same for you if ever you are in trouble."

Sick at heart, as this course of deceit is revealed, Ted turns over in his mind the best way of getting Stuart to tell Father.

"You want more than two pounds to make up the sum, don't you, Stuart?" he asks.

"Yes, another two pounds," replies Stuart, "I've paid off one, and that cleared me out,—I never was a good hand at saving."

There is a pause, and the two walk on in silence.

It is broken by Ted, who says, "Stuart, you *ought* to tell Father, *do* tell him, he'll be *so* kind."

Stuart is aghast. "That is the very thing I'm scheming to avoid," he says. "Ted, you are mad."

"No, I am not," says Ted firmly. "It is the only thing you can do. Stuart, even if you got the money to pay the Pitchers, you could never be happy, for it would still be on your mind. Oh, no, you could never look Father in the face again, if you keep from him the wrong you—"

- "Don't preach," snaps Stuart, "it is only you who would call a spree, wrong."
- "A spree!" repeats Ted, but Stuart's conscience has already stopped him, and he is silent.
- "Well," he says at length, "will you help me, or will you not?"
- "Tell Father," repeats Ted, "and you shall have my two pounds, and he will make up the rest."
- "I won't," says Stuart in a rage, "I am not going to tell; if I had, I should have done it without asking your advice. *This* is what comes of having a brother too good and too well-behaved to help one," and Stuart flings himself off.

Ted remains where he is left, unmoved by Stuart's taunt, which is nothing new, but much perplexed by the difficulties of his position. The doubt that arises is, whether it is right to lend Stuart the money when it would help him to conceal the deceit that ought to be confessed. On the other hand, will not the want of the money lead him deeper into the mire? when perhaps the relief of being able to pay off the worrying debt may soften his heart and induce him to tell the whole story to Father.

Such is the for, and such the against, and Ted turns them over and over in his mind, now inclining to the one, and now to the other, as is always the case with people whose scales are so seemingly nicely weighted as were Ted's. I say, *seemingly*, because a grown-up person would have known at once that however hard it was, refusal would have been the only alternative, as in no case are we allowed to do evil that good may come.

However, Ted is not nearly grown-up, and he thinks the matter over, and his head grows dizzy, and he feels sick and faint. He throws himself upon his back, his face turned up to the summer sky, and through all his thoughts there runs an under-current of prayer, that he may see the right and do it, which in the end cannot fail to be answered.

The mist surrounding Ted gradually clears, one by one his doubts vanish, and into his heart there comes a gleam of hope as he decides what shall be his course of action. Springing to his feet he shakes himself as though to rid himself of any chance cobweb that may be clinging to him yet; his usual brightness quickly returns, and bounding down the hill he hastens homewards, whistling as he goes.

He finds it later than he thought, and he runs fast, stopping every now and then to walk a few steps, or standing still to take breath altogether. In one of those pauses he hears a dog's bark, and it sounds so much like Rags' bark, short, sharp, decided, that he listens attentively to hear if it is repeated. It is not, and he has another long run which lands him, quite breathless this time, at the common.

Here, he pulls up short. If he was deceived in Rags' bark, he certainly is not deceived in his own pony. Why he would know Mischief's short legs, sturdy form, and swinging canter, anywhere. Yes, that is certainly Mischief in the distance, and that wild-looking figure upon Mischief's back, hatless and with red hair streaming wildly behind her,—that must be, yes—that surely is—Nannie! And that boy under the hedge, fanning himself with a huge dock-leaf, that little yellow head, that little round face, that shrimp of a figure, that certainly belongs to no one but Val.

This is what Ted sees for one brief second, the next, the scene entirely changes. There is a scream from Nannette, Ted is too far away to hear what she says, but Val rushes forward. Before he can reach her she is thrown upon the ground.

Val is not so clever a groom as he thought himself, for the saddle gradually loosened has slipped away altogether. Fortunately, Nannette felt it going in time to check Mischief's canter, so she is quite unhurt, and not much shaken.

Val's red checks that he has been fanning are white enough now, but when he finds there is no harm done, he recovers his spirits and assurance, and by the time Ted comes up both he and Nannette are making merry over the fall.

"But," says Nannie, with a rueful face, holding up her holland gown, "I promised Father only this morning that I would be careful, and just look what I have done since I came out."

The gathers of her dress are undone a good piece, leaving the skirt trailing on the ground, train-like; the pommel of the saddle has caught in the plaquet-hole which is torn down to the hem; and there is also a slit in the front of the unfortunate garment. Her face matches her hair in colour, and there is a broad black smudge across one cheek. Her hands too would be decidedly the better for a wash.

"My!" says Val, cutting a funny little caper, "I wouldn't be you for anything, Nannie. How Mother Fidget will scold."

"I think Mother Fidget may well scold to-day," says Ted, opening wide his 'thrilling eyes.' "I cannot think where you get your smudges, none of us come in for blacks, except you."

"It's my luck," says Nannette despairingly, "if ever there is a black within a mile, it always settles upon me."

"I must see about the saddle," says Ted, going up to where Mischief, like a well-behaved pony, is quietly eating, "I cannot think how Simon came to send you out with the saddle put on like this."

"Oh, I am sure," replies Val, perking up, "the saddle was very well put on, only that it wasn't quite tight enough."

"Ah," says Ted, looking round at Val, "that tells tales. Well, if you are going to saddle Mischief you must learn how to do it. Simon taught me. You know, Val, there might have been a serious accident with this saddle."

Ted speaks seriously, and Val is a little impressed.

"I'll show you where it is wrong," continues Ted, quite simply, and Val who would have resented the slightest attempt at patronising is pacified and promises to take a lesson from Ted before he tries to saddle Mischief again.

"You can ride home, Ted," says Val, generously, "and I'll walk with Nannie."

Ted jumps gladly upon Mischief's back, for he is anxious to get home quickly. "Good-bye," he says gaily, and glancing at the rent garments he adds, "if old Simon saw you, Nannie, he would say of you as he did of the dogs, 'Why you are nothing but rags and tatters.'"

Nannette and Val exchange glances of dismay.

"Oh, Ted," they exclaim with one voice, "we quite forgot!" and Nannette adds, "Rags and Tatters wanted so much to come that we brought them, and we've quite forgotten them. When did you see them last, Val?"

Val considers; "About half-an-hour ago," he says, "perhaps they have gone home."

Ted is more vexed than he appears.

"I hope they are not in mischief," he says, uneasily, "I was almost sure I heard Rags' bark, coming along."

Even as he speaks, two dusty figures are scampering along the road as hard as their four legs apiece will carry them. Two breathless panting dogs, whose tails wag joyfully as they see their master, and who run up to him to lay side by side, under Mischief's stout legs, a pair of blue-grey pigeons, pretty delicate creatures, daintily ruffled about the neck, and who only a short time ago were dressing their feathers with their beaks and uttering soft coos of happiness as they fluttered in the fresh breeze.

Nannette and Val are well punished for their recklessness in bringing out the dogs. They kneel down and stroke the ruffled feathers with tender fingers, and there are tears in Nannette's eyes and a lump in Val's throat as they lift them up and feel that they are warm from the life that must only just now have left them.

And naughty Rags and Tatters, how well they deserve their thrashing, which is a severe one, for Ted has shown them over and over again that no live creatures are to be hunted, and yet, out of the reach of Ted's warning whistle everything is forgotten, and no sooner does temptation come in their paths than they give themselves up to the mad delight of capturing two of the Miller's pet pigeons. And this is purely mischief and not love of sport. Nannette and Val feel that they never will be able to look the Miller in the face again, after being the cause of giving him so much vexation.

"If we never had brought the dogs," groans Nannette, "or if when we brought them we had looked after them!"

"I am afraid no ifs will mend the matter," said Ted, sorrowfully. "Will a pair like this cost much?"

"Oh, yes," says Val, "these are good birds, look," and he touches the dainty ruffle round the slim neck. "Nannie and I have been saving to get a pair like them, and—"

"Those who mar ought to mend," quickly concludes Nannette, who is not without a sense of justice. "It was our fault for bringing out Rags and Tatters, and we'll use our money to buy the Miller another pair."

"Oh, Nannie," says Ted gratefully, "I'll pay you back, only if you don't mind waiting for it, perhaps I shan't be able to manage just yet. And we had better get Father to go with us to the Miller's after tea. What do you think?"

"Oh yes," they both cry, "that is a capital thought."

"But," says Nannette sadly, "I am afraid that even if he has a pair *just* the same as these, as much alike as two peas, it won't *be* the same. Will it, Val?"

"Not nearly the same," assents Val.

And they each pick up a pigeon, for they think the Miller may like to bury them in his garden, as they would were they in his place, and Ted says, "We must do all we can by getting him another pair. Perhaps in time he'll like them as well as the dead ones." Then they start for home.

Rags and Tatters are still in disgrace, and Ted, calling them sternly "to heel," rides off. Side by side, their red tongues hanging out, their tails tucked between their legs, their ears drooping over their faces—Rags and Tatters follow Mischief closely, as miserable a pair of Scotch terriers as are to be found this afternoon in the united kingdoms of England, Ireland, and Scotland.



CHAPTER V.

MOTHER'S ROOM.

"PLEASE, Father, are you very busy? may I speak to you for a minute or two?"

It is Ted, breathless with the haste he has made, who is standing with the study door nervously held open in one hand, and himself half-in and half-out of the room. Nervous Ted certainly is, but when he has a disagreeable thing to do he does not *think* about it, but sets to work to get it off his mind as fast as he can.

"Come in," answers Father; "are you ready for tea, Ted? it is nearly six now."

"Quite ready, Father," says Ted, and the chestnut curls plentifully besprinkled with shining drops of water testify to his hurried "wash," as Val would call it. "I have got something to ask you," he continues.

"Ask on then," says Father cheerily, seeing Ted hesitate and look shyly up at him, as though he cannot quite pluck up courage.

"It's about a fellow," said Ted hastily, "who has got into a scrape. Any fellow might get into a scrape you know, Father."

"Yes, of course," says Father, "and a great many fellows do, I am afraid. But go on, Ted, what about your friend, for I suppose he is a friend, eh?"

"Oh, yes," says Ted, "a very great friend. But it isn't all a scrape, a good deal of it is—a misfortune. He had a misfortune, and he wanted me to lend him some money. I want to lend him the money, because you see, Father, I have two pounds in my money-box, part of it my pocket-money and the rest that present great-uncle sent me. So I could easily lend it him, only I couldn't decide whether I ought when he is keeping it from his Father."

"Keeping it from his Father," repeats Mr. Gray. "I should say you ought *not* to lend the money. It must be something more than a misfortune, Ted, I think."

"I said it was a scrape, Father," says Ted, "and oh, don't you think I may lend the money? because I thought that when he has once paid it off—the thing for which he owes—that he may not be so much afraid to tell his Father."

Something in Ted's face, voice, and manner, strikes Mr. Gray, and he looks at him intently. Ted is not so clever a hand at deception as he thought himself, and a glimmer of the truth flashes across Mr. Gray as he looks. He has always felt and lamented Stuart's want of open-

ness. Ted is the one of his children who has given him the least trouble, the least anxiety, and, though Val has many faults, he is always to be depended upon for truthfulness. But with Stuart it is different, several little acts of prevarication and want of truth, in action more than in words, have come under Mr. Grav's notice and caused him a good deal of pain. They arise from pride, the superiority Stuart has always felt and maintained over the rest of the family, causes him to take the crooked path of deceit and concealment, rather than lower himself before either of the others by owning himself in the wrong. Certainly school, where he is made to feel his proper level, is the best place for him. In the mean time Mr. Gray considers what is best to be done for the present. Stuart has evidently got into a scrape, though Mr. Gray's imagination does not carry him further than the breaking down a fence, or in some boyish or ungentlemanly frolic damaging one of the farmers' property in some way. It is useless to try and extort a confession from Stuart, and indeed Mr. Gray does not hold with extorted confessions, but he thinks that if left to himself he may be led to tell it of his own free will.

"You did wisely not to lend the money," says Father, "it would not have been right in your case. Helping a boy to conceal what ought to be told, is different to helping him when he is in trouble. Now, Ted, I am going to lend the money to your friend, and he is to pay me back as he can, bit by bit. You must tell him from

me that the only course left open to a boy when he gets into a scrape, whether from disobedience or thoughtlessness, is to own the fault and its consequences in a manly straightforward way. Deceit is *cowardly*, and a boy who is untruthful can never grow up any other than a mean-spirited despicable man, unless indeed he cures himself of the sin before it grows into a habit. Now, Ted, there is only one position in which *I* could have lent this money to your friend, and I want you not to think about it, but to trust me that it is all right, and then in a little while I will explain it to you."

Ted does not for a moment guess that Mr. Gray has found out what he thought he had so carefully concealed, namely, that "the fellow in a scrape" is Stuart himself, and that the position Mr. Gray means, as being the only one in which he could have helped by lending the money, is that of Father to son.

The four bright sovereigns are counted out into Ted's open palm, and he is about to run off, when he remembers that Rags' misdeeds have yet to be told. Father, by questioning, after hearing the story, draws out the reluctant fact that it was Nannette and Val who took out the dogs.

"I shall make it understood," says Father, "that no one is to take out Rags but you. Tatters is pretty steady when Rags' example is not before him, but as Rags does not stop for any whistle but yours, it is not safe for any one else to take him out. We shall have him slaying a whole sheep next."

"Tatters won't go anywhere without Rags, nor Rags without Tatters," says Ted laughing, "so they will have to stay at home when they can't go with me."

"I am very sorry about the Miller's pigeons," says Father, "for he has a great deal of trouble to make them so tame as they are, and I am sure he won't feel that another pair will replace the lost ones."

"That is what Nannie and Val said," answers Ted eagerly, "and they were so sorry, Father."

"After it was done," says Father, smiling a little. "I shall try and make those two careless folk recollect this. I shall tell them they must pay for the pigeons themselves, and you are not to interfere in any way, Ted, either in helping to pay for these pigeons, or in buying others for them. I shall make Nannie and Val plainly understand that."

Ted looks very crestfallen, and is about to plead again, when Father puts an end to the conversation by taking him by the shoulders and turning him out of the room.

"I will come with you to the Miller's after tea," says Father, "and help them out of the difficulty in that way as well as I can." With which promise Ted has to be content.

The rest of the family are assembled at tea, waiting for Father to say grace, and wondering what has happened to detain him, who is punctuality itself. Ted's absence is hardly noticed until he enters, and then Father following close upon him prevents any questions being asked.

"I have told Father, and he is coming with us," Ted has just time to whisper in passing Nannette.

She nods and smiles in answer, feeling assured that Ted has made the best and not the worst of it in telling Father. So far that is one trouble off her mind, though there is still the Miller to tell, which is worst of all, and Laura has yet to see the rent garment. Nannette, however, does not allow the thought of these things to interfere with her enjoyment of her tea, and while she is having it she decides that she will try and bear Laura's aggravating scoldings with more patience. "How I wish," she sighs to herself, "that Mother Fidget would have it well out and then have done with it, instead of worrying at one all day long."

It is curious how the gloom of one person affects a whole party. Stuart is like night; black, morose, and sullen, speaking never a word that he can help, and this ill-temper in a manner throws a constraint over all.

The story of the pigeons and the dogs is discussed. Father is very kind, but he does not hide from Nannette and Val that they must bear the consequences. For this they are quite prepared, and have already been reckoning their coins, and find that with this week's pocket-money they have just enough. They both own that they are very much relieved at Father's coming with them, for they have been dreading the confession

to the Miller. Stuart growls, "Just like Nannie and Val, such a couple of babies, not fit to take care of a kitten, let alone two dogs."

Val gives him a kick under the table, which Stuart is too dignified to return, but contents himself with such a sour look that Val calls out,

"I say, Laura, look sharp after the milk." Stuart turns away his head, and pretends not to have heard.

Violet is sitting by Father, eating stolidly her bread and milk while he discusses his dinner, and she manages to slip out of her well-cushioned chair upon the floor, where she demands to be "picked up."

Soon after the same thing happens again, and this time Father says,

"Violet is sleepy; Connie, tell Nurse to come and fetch her to go to bed."

Connie is on her way to the door, when she is stopped by a shrill indignant "No," from Violet herself, and Father says laughing,

"Then if Violet stays she must promise to be good and not roll off her chair again."

Violet gives no promise, but she quietly finishes her bread and milk, and does not repeat the experiment.

After tea Ted tries to attract Stuart's attention, as he wants to give him the money. Stuart, still in the worst of tempers, is "determined," as he thinks to himself, "not to stand any more preaching," and so he avoids Ted. Up stairs, down stairs, into the garden goes

Stuart, and Ted follows, trying to get speech of him, but not succeeding. Stuart, forgiving and forgetting, when it suits his purpose, gets hold of Val, and pulling that young gentleman's arm through his, he talks so loud and so fast that no one can get in a word. Val is much amazed, and not at all flattered, by Stuart's unusual condescension, and at last cuts him short by saying disrespectfully,

"There, shut up, Stuart, who wants to hear you talk? I'm off," and Val is gone like a shot.

Baffled in one way Stuart takes to flight, pursued still by the persevering Ted, and at last brought to bay in the nursery where he takes refuge, and before he has time to lock the door Ted rushes triumphantly upon him.

Violet is the only other occupant of the nursery, and she is waiting for Nurse, who has just been called away, to put her to bed.

Ted therefore, feeling he has no time to lose, plunges at once into the subject, and tells his story from first to last.

"Ted, you are a fool," is the way he is received, "why, it is as good as blabbing right out to tell Father-like that," and Stuart too angry for words paces up and down the floor.

"Oh, Stuart," says Ted, much shocked at the bare idea, "you don't really think so? oh, Father couldn't guess."

Stuart upon calmer reflection does not think that

Father has guessed, otherwise he would not have been just the same at tea, and that he certainly was. There are so many boys they know in the neighbourhood. Harry and Jim Howard, Frank Rostrum, and Alan Grant, their great chums, besides others. It might have been either of these, and Stuart reassures himself upon that head, though he does not relax in his grimness to Ted. He holds out his hand for the money, and Ted as he gives it, repeats the message in a trembling voice, about a "manly acknowledgment of the truth." Stuart's hand closes with a snap upon the sovereigns, and he flings himself off without another word.

Ted walks to the window and presses his forehead against the cold window-pane, and feels very miserable. Violet crawls up unseen by him, and clasping her short fat arms as far as they will go round his legs to attract attention, she crows, "Pick me up."

Ted lifts her in his arms, and feels such a sense of sympathy in that clinging embrace, and the pressure of that soft velvet cheek against his, that when Nurse returns he begs to have her if only for ten minutes.

"It must be only ten minutes then," says Nurse, "for she is later than her usual bed-time already. She sleeps a lot, she do, and is none the worse for it, I say," and Nurse yields Violet to Ted for the ten minutes, not able to resist the pleading in those eyes of "thrilling blue," though she again repeats as Ted reaches the

door, "Now mind, Master Ted, only ten minutes,—ten minutes sharp."

"I'll mind, Nurse," says Ted, and as the door closes upon him Nurse murmurs to herself, "And I can trust him, which I can't all them others."

Ted carries Violet along the corridor until he comes to a door with a key in the lock outside. He turns it and enters, pausing upon the threshold as he always does, and giving a reverent look around.

This is Mother's Room, with her books, and pictures, and treasures in it just as it used to be when she was alive. Every morning it is dusted by Laura's careful hands, and when it has to be cleaned Laura superintends it, first putting away the things gently and tenderly. Mother's Room is never used except as a hospital when any one is ill, and then it makes up a little for the illness for the invalid to lie in her bed, and have around him the familiar objects associated in his mind with the loving care and attention they all miss so much and so often. Of all the children Ted was the most wrapped up in Mother, and the one who missed her most. Whenever he feels sad or vexed he comes to sit here as he has come now, and Mother's Room and its memories never fail to bring a feeling of peace into the heart of the lonely boy. This evening as he sits on the couch by the window, Violet's arms encircling his neck, her soft cheeks still pressed to his, Mother's favourite verse, one she taught him when she was lying upon that very couch in the last days of her illness, comes into his mind.

"There is no place where earth's sorrows
Are more felt than up in Heaven;
There is no place where earth's failings
Have such kindly judgment given."

Ted shuts his eyes and tries to fancy he is telling Mother his present trouble, and that she is beside him to advise him what to do. He almost thinks he hears her well-known voice repeating the French motto of which she was so fond,—"Do what is right, and leave the rest to God." Well, he has tried to "do what is right," and now he must follow the remainder of the advice, and "leave the rest to God."

And Ted hardly likes to open his eyes for fear lest the feeling of peace and repose will leave him with the sense of sight. But it does not, and he leans back dreamily thinking, until he sees that Violet's head has fallen upon the sofa-pillow, her hands are unclasping their firm grasp round his neck, and she will soon be fast asleep. He rouses her gently, and takes her into the nursery and lays her in Nurse's lap, who is waiting to put her to bed.

"It's the mirror of punctuality you are, Master Ted," says Nurse approvingly, as she glances at the clock; "it's the ten minutes exact, and you're a young gentleman of your word, that you are."

"Who is a young gentleman of his word?" says a high-pitched, squeaky voice, and a round, yellow head appears peeping round the corner. "Oh, I might have known it was Ted,—that comes of having eyes! There, Nurse," in a very injured tone, "you never say to me, 'Master Val, you are a young gentleman of your word."

"I am not given to telling stories, Master Val," retorts Nurse; "I can't give you a character you don't deserve, can I?"

"It's nothing to do with *deserving*," answers Val, solemnly, "it's prejudice; you can't deny it's the *eyes* that do it, Nurse. If I had eyes of 'such a *thrilling* blue,' you would be ready enough to say, 'Master Val, you're a young gentleman of your word!"

"Don't talk nonsense, Val," says Ted laughing, and Nurse smiles too as she pictures to herself Ted's large, gentian-blue eyes in the midst of Val's little, round, ugly face. The result would be much more comical than even now, for as it is Val's Chinese eyes exactly suit his style of face, and to do him justice his want of good looks does not trouble him in the least, and there is no feeling of jealousy towards Ted. Only—one beauty amongst such a *very* plain family must pay for his advantages by being the safety-valve of their chaff and nonsense when they have nothing else to joke about. This is the light in which the Grays regard the subject.

"Come and have a turn at cricket, Ted," commands rather than asks Val; "I've been hunting for you all

over the place, and keeping out of Stuart's way too. What did he mean by hanging on to a chap like that? I wasn't going to saunter round the garden with him, and listen to his twaddle. And Nannie's dear, dear, dearest friend, Louisa Selina Clementina has come to see her. Her Father drove her, and he is going to call for her in ten minutes or a quarter of an hour. And there they are locked up in Nannie's room, embracing, and dearing, and cooing. Ugh! I'm thankful I am not a girl, I'd sooner be anything than a girl!"

All the time Val has been speaking he has been making for the orchard at an odd kind of jog-trot peculiar to himself. It is not running, and he does not look as though he is going fast, yet he gets over an immense amount of ground in a very short time, indeed he has not found any one who can beat him in racing, and he always arrives at the goal as fresh as when he set off from the starting post. Many have tried this jog-trot, but to no purpose, and Val remains undisputed master of the art.

"But Val," says Ted, when he comes up with him, "what is the use of beginning cricket when we must leave off directly? Father said he should be ready for the Miller's when he had answered a couple of letters."

"We can't start until dear Louisa Selina Clementina goes," replies Val, "and I don't believe in anybody's ten minutes. Look sharp, Ted! Hulloo! Louisa Selina Clementina's Father is much more punctual than I expected,—I hear the wheels of his carriage."

"How do you know it is those particular wheels?" asks Ted.

"I have got ears if I haven't got eyes," begins Val wickedly, and Ted in self-defence takes up his bat.

"I want you to show me that new dodge you learnt," says Val, "they'll be such a long time kissing, and coddling, and saying 'Good-bye,' that we shall have lots of time. Now for it, Ted," and Val turns back his cuffs in a way that means business.

But the parting between the two friends is soon over, hastened no doubt by the presence of their respective fathers, and Val has to don his coat without having learnt the "dodge" he brought Ted out to teach him.

The Grays find that the Miller has missed his pigeons, and after calling and looking for them made up his mind that something must have happened to them. Of course he is vexed, but he conceals his vexation as well as he can when he sees how sorry the children are for having been the cause of it. Father has advised them to say nothing about the pigeons that are coming in the place of the dead ones.

Much more at their ease now the dreaded visit is over, the party of four have a merry walk back. They have waited to chat and rest after their business was over, and the stars are coming out upon the pale opal sky as they turn homewards. The dew lies thick upon the grass, and at every bend in the lane they pause to listen for nightingales. It is not often they are away so far at so late an hour, and they are bent upon making the most of it. It is nearly ten o'clock when they burst in upon the astonished Laura and Stuart, rosy, radiant, gleeful, Ted the brightest of them all. That ten minutes in Mother's Room did much for him. As he sat there with Violet in his arms he felt the burden lifted from him. "Do the best you can, and leave the rest to God,"—this was the message sent to him from heaven, and he tried to carry it out. And the peace remains with him now and for many a long day to come,—the peace God's Holy Angel brought to comfort him as he thought over his troubles in Mother's Room.



CHAPTER VI.

LOUISA SELINA CLEMENTINA.

"AND now about the Miller's pigeons," says Father, at breakfast the next morning. "How do you propose getting them? Val seemed to speak last night as though he knew of a pair that will do."

Val eagerly explains. Nannette and he have been wanting a pair of pigeons just the same as the ill-fated ones. Louisa Selina Clementina's Father's coachman told Val that a friend of his has some to sell of the kind they want.

"And oh, Father," concludes Val, "may I ride over to-day and ask Richards, that is the coachman you know, to get them for us?"

"You may certainly go, after lessons are over," says Father, "whether you may *ride* is not for me to say."

"You can have Mischief," says Ted, in reply to a look from Val.

"And, Father," says Nannette, eagerly bending forward,—

"Take care of that cup," calls out Laura in a warning voice.

Nannette pushes the cup further on the table and begins with—"Please, Father—"

"Do sit still," growls Stuart; "that's the fourth kick you've given me this morning."

"Gently, Nannie," says Father; "I can hear quite as well if you don't wriggle about so much, and if you speak more quietly."

"Then, please, Father"—but Nannette gets no further before an encouraging voice says,

"That is right, Nannie, try again."

"Shut up, Val," says Ted; "let her speak."

"Mind your own business," retorts Val.

"Now then, Nannie," says Father, "let us hear what it is you really want to say."

"Oh, might I borrow a donkey?" Nannie gets so far this time, but is again interrupted.

"Borrow dear Louisa Selina Clementina if you want a real donkey, and no mistake about it," says Val, and at the same time Stuart, with a glance round the table, mutters,

"You won't have far to go."

"The cap doesn't fit me," remarks Val, calmly.

"Be quiet, and let Nannie explain herself," says Father; "you have yet to tell us what you want with a donkey."

"I thought I might borrow a donkey and go and see Louisa, Father," says Nannette. "She said yesterday, it was so long since any of us had been to Owlet."

"To goose-pen," puts in Val.

"There is no objection to your going," answers Father, "provided Farmer Mairs will lend you Neddy, and I am sure he will, unless Neddy is otherwise engaged."

"But, Father," breaks in Val, aghast; "you don't mean to say you are going to let Nannie come with me?"

"Of course," answers Father; "with whom else should she go? You are going to Owlet to see Richards, and it is a capital opportunity for Nannie to pay a visit to her friend."

"But the donkey!" gasps Val.

"What about the donkey?" asks Father. "A donkey is—"

"A very respectable animal," concludes Stuart.

"The idea of Nannie upon a donkey coming with me!" says Val, who evidently can't get over it.

"It is not so very long ago you were glad enough to ride even a donkey when you could get him," says Stuart.

Val replies by a look of scorn.

"It is impossible for Nannie to come, Father," he says, grandly. "Mischief would never restrain his impatient steps to suit the pace of a donkey!"

Val's lofty air and language sit so ridiculously upon his small person, that the whole table is convulsed. Nannette is divided between her desire to see "dear Louisa," and her dislike to put out Val. The matter is settled by Father saying decidedly,

"If you can borrow Farmèr Mair's Neddy you can go, Nannie. Never mind what Val says. It will do him good to have his pride taken down a peg or two. Do you understand, Val? You are to take Nannie with you this afternoon; you riding Mischief, and Nannie, the donkey, if she can get him; if not, she must wait for another time."

Val looks sulky, but says nothing.

By half-past two the steeds are awaiting their riders at the hall door. Val, seeing no help for it, has given in, grumblingly: first making it thoroughly understood that he is to have nothing to do with Louisa. She is not to be brought into his path at all, but Nannie is to say "Good-bye" in the house, and then join Val, who will be waiting for her at the gate entering the drive.

The whole family assemble to watch them start—much to Val's disgust—and it is the opinion of all that the two ought to change places. The donkey, for a donkey, is compact and well fed, but he is small, and the bonny Nannette looks greatly out of keeping upon Neddy's grey back. Val again, with his shrimp of a figure, is a mere nothing for Mischief's square form, and sturdy legs, to carry. Mischief evidently thinks the same, for his sharp neigh, tossing of the mane, and pawing of the forefeet seem to say, "Hold on tight, little Master, you are like a fly upon my back, I could whisk you off in a second."

Val hurries Nannette, for he does not like the remarks that are passing around them. As they proceed in state down the drive Stuart chants after them, mockingly,

"If I had a ridiculous animal that would not make good speed,
Do you think I'd chastise him? Not I indeed.
I'd furnish him with provender, and remark, 'Proceed,
Walk along, Edward.'"

Val, with a very red face, draws himself up to look more dignified, and takes a side-long glance at the unfortunate, much-derided animal. "I'll have the laugh at Stuart some day," he murmurs. While Nannette jogs happily along, and wisely turns Val's thoughts in other directions, so that they are soon in deep conversation; Stuart and the donkey a grievance no longer.

"Now mind, Nannie," says Val impressively, as she dismounts at the gate and ties the donkey's bridle to the post, "I shall ride round the back way, and you are to say nothing at all about me. Do you hear?"

"Yes," says Nannette, meekly, "I hear." She has made the same answer about twenty times already, for it is quite as often as that that Val has repeated these and similar directions since the morning.

"But, Val," continues Nannette, "suppose Louisa should ask me how I came and who brought me. What shall I say then?"

"Say her brother carried you," says Val, with a chuckle at his own poor wit. "But I won't have that Louisa

Selina Clementina bothering me. I never saw such a girl for talking, it's chatter, chatter, chatter, chatter, till you don't know whether you are standing on your head or your heels."

Nannette laughs. "I'll do my best," she says, "but you know, Val, I can't tell a story if she asks me how I came here, and she is sure to think I came with you, because we are so much together always."

"Ugh," says Val, making a face of disgust, "Well, Nannie, you must get over all your kissing, and hugging, and stuff, in the house, or on the doorstep, then you must say you are in a *great* hurry, because your brother doesn't like to be kept waiting. Then run away as hard as you can. I'll send one of Richards' boys to mind your beloved donkey. And don't be late, or I shall go without you."

With these parting injunctions Val canters off to the back gate. His interview with Richards is deeply interesting, and consequently long; but Nannette's with her friend is longer still, for Val is at the appointed waiting-place and there is no sign of her. He canters Mischief up and down the road several times, then sits cooling his heels and fuming at the difficulty there is in separating girls when once they get together.

"I dare say they've said 'good-bye' a dozen times if they have once," he muses, "and then it's 'Dear Louisa, when shall I see you again?' and 'Dear Nannie, don't go just yet, wait just five minutes longer.' And I should like

to see a girl who knew what five minutes meant. It's always twenty minutes or half an hour. I am so thankful I'm a boy. I wouldn't be a girl for any money."

Val's reflections have occupied him so deeply that he has not noticed approaching footsteps. Now, gay voices break upon his disgusted ear, and before he has time to turn and flee Louisa and Nannie are unlatching the gate and his retreat is cut off. There is nothing to be done but to face the enemy.

A great contrast to Nannette is Louisa Selina Clementina. Perhaps that is the reason they are such friends. Louisa is more like Laura—a picture of neatness-but then sober-minded Laura never indulges in so many gay ribbons as Louisa. Pink ribbons in her hair; pink ribbons round her neck; pink ribbons at her waist; pink ribbons looping the upper skirt of her light dress. Her dark curls are neatly arranged and herself irreproachable, from her top-knot to her bronze shoe. There is something about her that reminds every one of a bird. she has such a way of hovering round people, chattering all the time in a chirpy pipy voice, restlessly fluttering her ribbons, for Louisa can never be quite still. The boys call her gushing and affected, but Nannette, who ought to know best, declares she is neither. Louisa holds out a friendly hand to Val, "How d'ye do?" she says. "Why didn't you come up to the house, Val, after you had finished with Richards?"

Louisa's easy manners also form a contrast to Nannie's

blunt speeches, and her habit of rushing headlong at a subject. But Val is not a bit abashed at such a grand young lady with such grand manners. It takes a good deal to put Val out of conceit of himself.

"I was enjoying myself," he mumbles ungraciously, in reply to Louisa's polite speech.

"What were you doing?" asks Louisa with some curiosity.

Now Val, after he had transacted his business, had employed himself in helping Richards groom a horse, an occupation entirely after his own heart. He would not mind Louisa knowing this, only he sees she is curious, so replies tantalizingly,

"Oh, something," and tries to catch Nannette's eye to telegraph in a way she will understand, "cut it short." But Nannette is too much engrossed with dear Louisa to look in the right direction. So Val says firmly,

"You must look sharp, Nannie, or we shall be late home. Now then, hurry."

"Oh, Val," says Louisa in her most gushing manner, "don't hurry Nannie; remember how little I see of her, and then I am sure you will be more patient. Besides there really isn't any hurry: Nannie says you don't have tea until six. Dear Nannie, didn't you say so?"

Val gives his sister such a black look, that she hastily interposes,

"Oh, please, Louisa dearest, I think we must be going now," and she takes the cloak that has done duty for a habit from Neddy's patient back, and prepares to mount. Val whistles quite cheerfully, he little knows the "dodges," as he afterwards expresses it, with which girls manage to get their own way.

"Such a *dear* little donkey!" exclaims Louisa rapturously, as the cloak being taken off, Neddy's beauty is seen to greater perfection.

"Little beast," growls Val, and to Nannette's practised ear the expression is meant to apply quite as much to Louisa as to the animal in question.

"Oh no, Val," says Louisa, "he's such a darling little donkey!"

"He is a nice little fellow," says Nannette, patting Neddy affectionately, and stroking his long, soft ears.

"He's such a *love* of a little donkey!!!" exclaims Louisa in still greater rapture. "Where *did* you buy him, Nannie dearest?"

Nannette explains that he is only borrowed. Louisa listens with great interest.

"If I could persuade Papa," she says, "to buy me a donkey just like Neddy, how nice it would be! I could ride over so often to see you, Nannie, love,"—Val's face is a sight—"and I dare not ride upon a pony, I am so dreadfully afraid,"—Val's chin is elevated, and his nose points to the sky,—"but I am sure no one need be afraid to ride such a love of a little donkey as this!"

Nannette enters eagerly into this scheme, and suggests that sometimes Farmer Mairs has donkeys to sell.

Louisa seeks every information upon the subject, while Val gets blacker and more fidgety, though the friends are so engrossed with settling one of Neddy's brother at Owlet, and planning the delights that will be born of that pleasing event, that they do not notice the lapse of time, nor Val's impatience.

"Nannie," at length says the worn-out Val majestically, "if you don't come at once I shall go without you."

"Oh, you never would be so unkind," chirps Louisa, whisking suddenly round and giving Val one of her most fascinating smiles. "And just after we've been settling something so nice, something that I am quite sure you will enjoy so much. Guess what it is, Val."

"Can't," says Val shortly, showing he is not to be won over by any airs and graces.

"Just try and guess," says Louisa insinuatingly; "something that I am sure you will like."

"Can't guess riddles," says Val pettishly, "never could.

And I want to go."

"Some people can't," replies Louisa, with provoking good humour; "so I will tell you, Val. When the hay-making begins Mamma has promised that I shall have a hay-making party. We are to have tea in the hay-field picnic fashion, and all kinds of games and fun. Dearest Nannie and I have been talking it over. Now, Val, won't that be nice?"

"For those who like it," replies Val ungraciously.

"But don't you like it?" chirps Louisa with a flutter

of surprise. "I thought you would enjoy it so much—and I am sure you will when the day comes. Oh, yes, you must promise to come to my party, Val?"

"Can't promise," growls Val, "it's a long time yet."

"Not such a very long time," says Louisa, "not more than a fortnight at the outside, and if this fine weather lasts, this field," pointing over the hedge across the road, "will be cut in less than that. You must come, Val."

"I hate girls," returns the unpolite Val, "and there'll be such a lot of girls."

"Thank you," chirps Louisa laughing. "Yes, of course there will be girls, but there will be boys too. Harry and Jim will be home by then, and you are such friends with Jim."

"If there will be some boys I don't so much mind coming," says Val, and with this ungracious answer Louisa has to be content.

Nannette begins to feel it is wise to depart, for there is no knowing of what rudeness Val may be guilty if he is goaded much more. Louisa hovers round her friend, settles her cloak, and has many more parting words before she will let them go. Then, when Val thinks she has really finished, there is a message to each at home, and "dearest Nannie" has to promise she will invite every one of them severally to the hay-making party. Even Violet has an invitation. Louisa too is to beg Papa to buy a brother of Neddy's, that she may ride over and tell Nannette the day and hour fixed for the party.

"Good-bye" is really said at last. Mischief and Neddy set their faces homewards, and Louisa waving her hand many times trips gaily up the avenue, her sash ends fluttering after her. Nannette settles herself upon Neddy, and meekly awaits the expected outburst. Val rides on some way in grim silence. At length he says, very slowly, very deliberately,

"If ever there was a little beast, that girl is one."

"Oh, Val!" begins Nannette-

"So she is," interrupts Val, "a beast,—that is what she is. The way she hung on to a fellow and wouldn't let go. She's worse than a crab! worse than a limpet! a burr is nothing to her! My! I'd like to see her hang on to Stuart,—how he'd hate it."

"I'm sure he wouldn't be so rude to poor dear Louisa," says Nannette half crying, "as you have been to-day."

"He has never been tried," says Val glumly. "I never came across such an idiot as *that* girl in all my life,—she wouldn't take 'no' for an answer."

"She was very good-natured after all your rudeness," says Nannette warmly; "and I am sure you would be sorry if she had taken the 'no.' You will enjoy the party when it comes as much as any one."

"I know that if I go I'll take pretty good care to keep out of Louisa Selina Clementina's way," says Val.

"Tell me what you settled about the pigeons," says

"Oh, it's all right," says Val briskly, and entering into

the subject with zest, and after it has been discussed, Nannette and he begin to reckon up how long it will be before they can save enough to buy a pair of the same pigeons for themselves. Val goes ahead at a great pace, and purchases the pigeons in a very short time, but Nannette cuts short his reckoning, and will not let him count in possible or impossible windfalls from Aunts or Uncles, and she herself soberly adds up only their combined weeks' pocket-money.

"I wish," says Val, as the subject of Louisa dismissed, they jog on amiably together, "that Father had not said that Ted was not to give us the pigeons; I know he is panting to do it, and when people like to spend their money I think they ought to be encouraged."

"It's to make us remember," says Nannette; "and I am sure it serves us right, Val. We'll go on steadily saving up, and not think about what people may give us."

"Yes," says Val, somewhat doubtfully, for not being of "a frugal mind," the practice of "saving up" is not a practice that commends itself to him, and Nannette has to be very stern and keep the savings herself, otherwise they would dribble away coin by coin, and Val would be the first to be astonished at finding the box empty. Once they were saving their money for some scheme, and on a wet day, when Val was mooning about the house seeking something to do, he invited Nannette to turn out their respective money-boxes. Nannette poured the contents of hers into her lap, and counted a fair

number of coins,—three shilling pieces, nine sixpences, eight fourpenny bits, eleven threepenny bits, and five pence in coppers.

"Now, Val," says Nannette triumphantly, and Val with an air of great importance unlocked his money-box, and emptied it of its contents. There were,—one sixpence, a crooked threepenny bit, kept "for luck," two pennies, four half-pennies, seven farthings, two rusty nails, and five brass coins!

Val's surprise was quite genuine, yet he had been spending money whenever he wanted anything. It is since that day that Nannette keeps his money as well as her own when they are saving for a joint purpose.

In the course of the evening it comes out that Val has really, after all his efforts to the contrary, seen his pet aversion, Louisa Selina Clementina, and many are the questions asked him.

Val whittles away at a willow stick, and gives no sign that he hears the shower of remarks and conjectures rained down upon him.

"That accounts for his small appetite at tea," says Stuart pathetically, "no wonder. Poor fellow!"

Even Laura unbends. "I thought he seemed low, but concluded it was still the donkey," she chimes in.

"Cheer up, old boy," says 'Ted, "don't let it do you a lasting injury."

"He has promised to go to the hay-making party," says Connie, "he'll never get through the afternoon."

"What wiles she must have used to induce him to take such a step," says Stuart; "you don't mean it, Connie?"

Connie nods. Stuart sings,

"With an air and a grace,
And a shape and a face,
She charms like beauty's goddess."

Val rises, and slowly brushes away the bits of stick clinging to his trousers, then, whistling unconcernedly, prepares to quit the room.

"Tell us what she said?" cries Laura.

"Tell us what she said?" cries Stuart.

"Tell us what she said?" cries Ted.

"Tell us what she said?" cries Connie.

At the door Val pauses, puts his head on one side, holds up an imaginary dress, and in pipy, bird-like tones, chirps,

"Such a dear little donkey! Such a darling little donkey!! Such a love of a little donkey!!!"

Nannette chokes in her effort to be loyal to her friend, then gives up the attempt. And in the roar that follows Val far up stairs her voice is plainly heard.

When out of sight Val grins complacently. He likes having the last word.



CHAPTER VII.

VAL'S CONQUEST.

I T is the day of the hay-making party at Owlet, and the time is three o'clock in the afternoon. A most unusual silence, for that hour, pervades the garden at Veramede and the lower regions of the house. But there is noise enough above stairs to make up for it.

Violet is to go for an hour or so, until she gets sleepy, and then Nurse is to bring her home. It is Violet's first appearance in society, and she is sitting upon Anna Maria's lap, the first ready, a soft Lump of white, two rose-red cheeks gleaming from beneath her shady white hat. Every one has interrupted his or her dressing to rush in and give Violet a hug. She receives their fervent embraces very placidly; but not so Anna Maria, who indignantly protests that they "are making the darling a mass of crumples and not fit to be seen. And won't Nurse be cross? that's all."

Laura looks nice and ladylike in her green and white muslin, which will probably come home, even though the party is a haymaking one, as fresh as it is now. She inspects Violet, smoothes out the crumples, kisses the rosy velvet cheek, and departs to look after the others.

Nannette and Connie are in white piqué, with Etonblue trimmings. Laura takes a careful survey of Nannette, and for once can find no fault, except that she sighs as she wishes those rippling waves of red hair could be brushed into silky curls, or coiled round the head in glossy plaits. But, as the old proverb has it,

"If wishes were horses, beggars might ride."

"Now, Nannie," says Laura, impressively, "you really have got a dress that won't tear. Yes, I do think," she continues, with increasing satisfaction, "that you cannot possibly tear that piqué. Mrs. Baker took a bit of it in her hand in the shop, and pulled hard at it, and the shopman himself said that it could not tear."

"It seems very strong," says Nannie, "but I do wish that you had got me something coloured. White soils so quickly."

"The coloured stuffs were not nearly so strong," argues Laura. "Of course you will come home looking as though you had helped to sweep a chimney; I am quite prepared for *that*. But then the dress will wash and be as good as new when it is clean."

The Grays are ready to start, the waggonette that is to

take them is at the door; and in it are seated, Laura, Nannette, Ted, Connie, Violet, Nurse; and Stuart on the box. But where is Val?

"I'll go and see," cries Ted, jumping out.

In a few seconds there is a curly head appearing from a window high up, and a voice shouts,

"Says he won't come."

"Tell him he must. We won't go without him," is shouted back.

This message is faithfully conveyed. Val is sitting upon his bed, his coat and boots off, one sock lying on the floor, and a bare foot dangling to and fro.

"I say, this will never do!" says Ted. "They are all ready and waiting, and you not nearly ready. Val, my boy, you must hurry."

"Ain't going," says Val sulkily, the bare foot dangling faster.

"Oh, nonsense," says Ted, "you know you promised, and you must keep your promise. Besides, we won't really go without you."

Shouts from below, and Ted has to quiet them.

"I'll come up," shouts Nannette.

"No good, stop where you are," shouts Ted, and Laura lays a detaining hand upon Nannette, afraid to trust the white piqué out of her sight until she has seen it arrive, in its first freshness, safely at Owlet.

Ted turns round upon Val.

"You really must hurry," he says, "they'll frizzle away

like the ninth little nigger if they stay much longer in that sun. Where are your clean socks?"

Val does not answer, nor does he show any sign of moving.

"Aren't you well?" asks Ted, looking anxiously at Val's moody countenance.

"Of course I am," says Val with energy, "it's because of that *little beast*."

" What?" inquires Ted.

"Louisa Selina Clementina," mutters Val.

"Oh, Val," says Ted laughing, "I didn't think you were such a coward!"

"I'm not a coward," says Val, rousing himself, "but you've no notion what that girl is. No one knows but me. If she makes up her mind to hang on to a fellow she'll do it, and nothing will make her let go. Ugh! how she jabbers," and Val shudders at the recollection.

"You are friends with Jim, and he'll be there," says Ted. "Besides, you can manage to keep out of Louisa's way when there is such a lot of people there. And I'll help you."

"Will you?" says Val, "really and truly?"

"I'll help you all I can," says Ted.

"All right," says Val, setting to work in earnest with his dressing. "I should think if I try to keep out of her way, and you try to keep her out of my way, then even Louisa Selina Clementina herself won't be able to dodge us."

"Oh, no," says Ted, hopefully.

"But you don't know her as well as I do," continues Val, with a groan, the darker side of the picture getting the upper hand.

"That unfortunate afternoon did so much mischief," says Ted.

"It opened my eyes," replies Val solemnly, shaking his head. "I know what girls are now. If I live to a hundred I'll never have anything to do with them!"

"What about Nannie?" asks Ted.

"Nannie is a brick, not a girl," says Val.

"And here she comes," says Ted, as footsteps are heard bounding up stairs two steps at a time. "I wish she had been patient a little longer."

Nannette bursts open the door with a crash, "Oh, Val," she says, "I am so glad you are nearly ready, they are in such a stew. Let me help you. What made you so late?"

"Don't bother," growls Val. "Pour out some water, Ted."

"I will," cries Nannette, and before Ted can even turn round she has seized the water-jug which the housemaid, as housemaids are fond of doing, has filled to the brim. Nannette pours some of the water into the basin, but a great deal more over her spotless piqué.

A shriek from Nannette, an expressive whistle from the two boys.

"There was never such luck as mine!" says Nannette,

almost in tears, "oh, dear, what will Laura say? And it was only just now she was telling me that it wouldn't tear and that I could only get it dirty. She never thought of water."

"Run quick to Anna Maria," suggests Ted. "Val isn't quite ready yet."

"I'll dawdle," says Val.

Nannette runs off to Anna Maria, who wipes her down with a clean towel and puts her in front of the fire to still further dry herself; and though the first freshness and stiffness of the piqué cannot be brought back, yet Anna Maria says that by the time they get to Owlet the accident will not show itself—much.

Val comes into the kitchen to fetch Nannie, knowing what they must both expect, and feeling that a scolding shared is only half a scolding. Fresh from "having a wash," Val looks more ridiculous than ever. It was unkindly said of him once that if any one took the trouble they could count the hairs upon his head. That was of course an exaggeration, but Val's locks are certainly scanty, and now that the few there are, are wet and plastered down, his head looks absurdly like a baby's, the pink skin shining through the yellow hair.

Though the waggonette party have not "frizzled up" like the ninth little nigger, Nannette and Val do not find that waiting in a hot June sun has improved their tempers, and they both "catch it," as Val whispered "he knew they should."

"Next time," says Laura, severely and firmly, as at length they are fairly on their way, "I shall keep you quite close to me, Nannie, until we get to the place where we are going. Whatever you may say, I will not let you leave my side."

"Better put her in your pocket," suggests the undaunted Val.

"Of course there is no chance of my making any impression upon her if you always will turn everything I say into ridicule." And Laura looks hot and cross.

"Now it's my turn," says Val. "You don't deserve the blessing of brothers and sisters when you are so thankless for it."

Ted is caught in the act of laughing at an irresistibly comically serious face Val has put on. The goaded Laura turns upon him, and it is his turn to get in for it like the other two, only "more so," as he bears it so much more meekly. After that, Laura feels it is wisest to leave off, and relapses into injured silence which lasts until they arrive at Owlet.

Louisa Selina Clementina is receiving her guests upon the lawn, from which they are to go in a body to the hayfield, which is just across the road. The Grays are the last, thanks to Val, and Louisa bears down upon them, all muslin and ribbons like the butterfly she is, holding out both hands and fluttering welcomes right and left. Val keeps well in the background, knowing that his greeting must come, and hoping he'll be let off with that.

"Darling Nannie, so glad to see you." ("I wouldn't be kissed before such a lot if I were Nannie," mutters Val.) "But what makes you so very late? Dear Laura, how good of you to come, and darling little Violet! Oh, what a duck it is!" And Violet is smothered in kisses.

Stuart and Ted escape easily. Not so Val.

"Oh, Val, I was so afraid you were not here. I didn't see you till just this minute. Jim is somewhere about, but first of all I want to introduce you to Aunt Lucy, who is staying with us. She is dying to know you."

Val groans audibly, and looks at Ted, who shakes his head to imply that he can do nothing in this case, and Val is carried off captive in Louisa's wake. She flits along by his side, never ceasing talking, except to take breath. However, luckily for Val, she pauses for a minute to say a few passing words to some one, and, without any regard to ceremony, her captive makes his escape.

"I say, Jim," he says, tucking his arm into Jim's as though it was only yesterday they parted; "aren't you sick of talking twaddle to a pack of girls? Let us be off."

"All right," says Jim. "When did you turn up? I've been looking for you. We'll off to the hayfield at once, and leave the rabble to follow."

"Val, Val," screams a shrill voice, "I want you. Come here, Val."

Val looks neither right, left, nor behind him. Jim looks behind. "It's only Louisa," he says, "and it is sure to be nothing particular if *she* wants you. You are not going back, are you, Val?"

"Oh dear no," says Val, and putting his hands up to his ears to shut out the objectionable voice. Louisa feels that chasing is useless, and gives up the pursuit.

"Master Val shall not be let off, though," she thinks, as she fans herself and prepares to marshal her gay troop to the hayfield, "what a little bear he is."

Once in the hayfield then the fun begins. The hay is dry, sweet-scented, and plenty of it. The younger children are buried by their elders, and tumble out screaming with laughter. Val, being so beautifully small, is buried by his friends in great state, quite a high cock erected over him, with Stuart sitting on the top. Then comes Jim's turn, then Harry's, Stuart's, Ted's, Frank's, and all the other boys, too many to name, and Louisa once she has let Val slip away does not find it so easy to get him again. She tries to enlist Ted in her service, but though very polite, he does not hold out any hope of bringing Val to her side.

Violet is petted by all. She is not an amusing child, for she hardly ever speaks, never if she can help it, but she is clinging and good with every one, allowing herself to be caressed, kissed, pulled about, almost torn to

pieces with the most placid and unfailing good-humour; until Nurse declares she must go home, and then the whole bevy of girls convey her to the waggonette, disputing on the way for the honour of carrying her.

Next is proposed Blind-man's-buff, in which all join, except Laura, who sits under a tree and talks to Aunt Lucy, who has come out to watch the fun.

If Val was easy to smother, he is difficult to catch, for he is like an eel, and even when the Blind-man has his hand upon him he manages to wriggle off in a way only known to himself. And when they vary the game a little, by letting the eyes be free and tying instead the hands of the catcher behind his back, it so happens that every one has been blindfolded except Val. All the efforts therefore of the catcher are directed, now that they can see, to catching Val, who has evidently made up his mind that he won't be caught. He wriggles and doubles, and twists about with increasing success, and no one can get hold of him. "We won't give up the game until Val is caught," is the general cry.

Now it is Louisa who has to have her hands tied, and with a gay little laugh she trips after Val. He takes it easily; he has no faith in a girl's running and a special contempt for Louisa's mincing steps. He lets her get quite close to him, then gives one of his famous wriggles and is off with a leisurely trot in the other direction. This happens several times, and Val amuses himself by seeing how near he can let Louisa come without quite

catching him, and in spite of her failure she perseveres. Now, she is quite close to him as she has been often before; Val is just about to double when his foot catches in the grass and he stumbles. He is upon his feet in half a second, but Louisa has been close to him and he feels she has a firm grasp at his coat. She is rewarded for her exertions by the cheers of the party, and calling some one to untie her hands she asks Stuart, who is standing by, to hold Val for her, as she wants to take him to her aunt.

Val may well be disgusted. That he should be caught at all; caught by a girl; and that girl Louisa! Poor Val, how angry he is with himself, and how he wishes he had not been quite so secure.

"Now I am ready," chirps Louisa, who is red and panting. "What a hard knot Harry tied the handkerchief in. Come along, Val. Aunt Lucy will be so pleased to see you, and I am not going to let you escape this time."

Nor does she. She lands him safely under the cool shady tree where Aunt Lucy and Laura are sitting. Aunt Lucy is quite an old lady, for she is great-aunt to Louisa. She looks over her spectacles at the boy, whom her greatniece is leading up to her.

"This is the boy I told you about, Aunt Lucy," is Louisa's introduction as she flutters into a sitting position, her muslin skirts making a beautiful cheese as she descends. "His name is Valentine Gray, but he is *always*

called Val. He is brother to Nannie, my dearest friend. You know Nannie, Aunt Lucy?"

"Yes, my dear," says Aunt Lucy; "and a very nice friend for you she is. I like to see young people friends. How are you, my dear?" and she holds out her hand to Val.

Val shakes hands, feeling very fierce. It is a long time since he has been called "my dear," and he strongly disapproves both of that, and the style of introduction. "Just as though I had been a table," he grumbles afterwards to Ted. "She couldn't have been more off-hand about it. 'This is the table that Williams made, Aunt Lucy. Williams is brother to the organ-blower. You know the organ-blower, Aunt Lucy?"

"This is the boy who doesn't like girls," persists Louisa. "He actually wouldn't come to my party at first because he said there would be such a lot of girls. I coaxed him a great deal before he would promise to come."

"You didn't," cries Val, for this is more than he can stand. "I came of my own accord."

Aunt Lucy is looking pensively at Val, and presently she gives a deep sigh. "You remind me so much, my dear," she says, "of one of my nephews. He was my favourite nephew, and his parents being in India, I had the charge of him. But it was not for long. He caught the scarlet fever at school; I nursed him through it, but he died. He was such a good boy! Dear Edward!"

and the old lady pauses in her knitting, takes off her spectacles and rubs them.

There is silence for a minute, and Laura asks gently,

"How old was your nephew when he died?"

"Well," says Aunt Lucy, "he must have been about the age of this young gentleman. Yes, about that age, I should say. If he had lived for another week he would have been eight years old."

Aunt Lucy resumes her knitting; her mind recurring to the much-loved nephew, whose death was the one great grief of her life.

Louisa bites her lips and discreetly refrains from looking at Val by turning away her head; Laura, not so kind, smiles openly; and amazement seems to have taken away for the time Val's power of speech. At length he bursts forth indignantly,

"But I'm eleven! Turned eleven! I was eleven last March!"

"Were you, my dear?" answers Aunt Lucy pensively; "but surely you are very small for your age. Now my dear boy,—"

In spite of Laura's warning look which plainly says, "Don't be rude," Val gets up and takes a hasty departure, Louisa pitying his wounded feelings too much to stop him. Laura apologizes for him, and Aunt Lucy recalled from dreamland awakes to the fact that she "is afraid she must have been very unkind to Val. Boys are so sensitive about their ages." In vain Laura assures her

that "Val's pride was the only thing hurt," and that "it will do him a great deal of good." Aunt Lucy declares she shall not be satisfied until she has made her peace with him, and she wanders off in search of him, declining any company.

But Val is nowhere to be found. He has gone to the stables "to give myself time to breathe," as he informs Ted, whom he meets on the road, "and to get out of the way of that little beast. I shouldn't think she would follow me there,"

"Hardly," says Ted; "I'll come with you, Val."

"No, you won't," answers Val, snappishly, for his temper has been hardly tried. "I don't want you. And what do you know about pigeons? Go back to the others."

At this moment a voice Val knows only too well is heard from the other side of the hedge.

"Can't you find him, Aunt Lucy? I wonder where he can be. I will come and help you."

"That's me," says Val, "but they won't find me. Give dear Louisa Selina Clementina my best love, Ted."

If it had been Stuart, with whom the message was left, it would have been faithfully delivered, but Val would know better than to leave such a message with Stuart. When Ted returns to the hay-field Louisa catches sight of him and trips up to him.

"Do you know where Val is, Ted?" she asks, "I am looking for him everywhere. Aunt Lucy wants him."

"He is in the stables," answers Ted; "gone to tell Richards how some pigeons he and Nannette bought of a friend of Richards are getting on."

"I can't go after him there," says Louisa, glancing at her much-flounced muslin with its delicate mauve ribbons. And she evidently expects Ted to offer to fetch him for her. As he does not she adds, "I shall see him at tea, and that will do as well," and then she trips off again.

Ted is in search of Nannette, and Connie, whom he has not seen, to speak to, since they came. He meets Laura, bound on the same errand, and they join forces. Connie is soon found, sitting in the midst of a group of children of her own age, all of them tired out with romping and playing a quiet game.

"There is tea getting ready," says Laura, uneasily, "and I must find Nannie to make her respectable, or else she will be sitting down to tea the greatest fright in existence."

"I should leave her alone," says Ted; "there is no one in apple-pie order. Who could be after a hay-making party?"

"Boys never see anything," answers Laura contemptuously. "You just encourage Nannie in her Tom-boy ways, and don't see that she is never like anybody else. Let us look for her in the gardens."

"At the swing," says Jim, whom they meet on the way thither, and who is laden with good things for tea. And having satisfied Laura, he continues, "Lend us a helping hand, Ted," and Ted readily complies.

Laura pursues her way alone and when she comes in sight of the swing an impatient expression rises to her lips.

Nannette has been engaged for the last half-hour in swinging some of the younger children; her face is of the "boiled-lobster" hue, as Val expressed it; her hair, rough and untidy enough by this time, is falling over her face and shoulders in wild confusion; her dress is much crumpled, and soiled by the grass in many places; her bright blue sash has come unfastened, and one end trails on the ground; and the ribbons round her neck are streaming before, instead of behind her. She turns round as Laura comes up, and shows a face beaming with goodnature, even if its colour is somewhat deeper than usual.

"Oh, Laura," she says, "do come and help me swing these children,—I am so hot."

"You look it," remarks Laura drily, and in the rebuking voice Nannette knows so well. "Tea is almost ready, and you must come at once and let me make you a little more respectable for it."

With a sigh Nannette follows Laura to Louisa's room, from whence she appears tidier than when she went in.

Every one meets at tea. A large space has been cleared of the hay, under Aunt Lucy's shady tree, and here the tablecloths are spread upon the grass. Upon the tablecloths are the good things for tea, all of them

prettily arranged with flowers. Plum-cake, seed-cake, saffron-cake, Scotch-bun, Bath-buns, and ginger-cakes, besides a quantity of bread-and-butter, both white and brown. Aunt Lucy and Louisa pour out tea, and they have so much to do that Val whispers to Ted,

"I shall be able to eat in peace, and I'll do my share towards the tea-pot."

Ted watches. Val being master of the situation is now quite happy for the time. He has taken up his position in about the middle of the long line of tablecloths, so he can send his cup to whichever he chooses, Aunt Lucy or Louisa. The former is at his right, the latter is at his left, and he chooses the latter.

Most of the guests are thirsty, the heat and the amusements combining to make them so. But where all are thirsty, Val's thirst it seems impossible to quench, his neighbours are tired with passing his cup.

"May I trouble you for another cup of tea?" he says, as his cup goes up for the eighth time, and he speaks in such exact imitation of Louisa's voice and habit of emphasizing her words, that Ted and Laura give him warning looks, and Nannette from her post beside Louisa almost jumps.

Another slice of seed-cake and a piece of Scotch-bun. These are quickly disposed of, and then Val says,

"So sorry to trouble you, Louisa," and passes his cup for the ninth time.

"It is no trouble," says Louisa, good-natured to the

last, though her arm is aching. Nannette helps her as much as she can by creaming and sugaring the tea, an office she does not perform so well as Louisa does hers, for she overturns the sugar-basin twice and the creaming once.

"It's awfully jolly seed-cake," remarks Val to his next neighbours, Jim on one side, Frank Rostrum on the other; "I'd advise you to go in for it."

"The plum is the best," says Jim, "try a slice, old fellow."

The slice of plum-cake entails another cup of tea. Louisa, having glanced around, concludes that she has fully satisfied the wants of her guests, and is just settling down to her first slice of bread-and-butter, when Val says sweetly,

"Another cup of tea, please, Louisa, so sorry to trouble you."

"Don't mention it," says Louisa, setting to work again. Nannette, now quite ashamed of Val, tries to meet his eyes to telegraph a message. But Val will not look at her.

"Yes, plum is the best," says Val, as he finishes the last crumb, "You were right, Jim."

"Nothing beats the saffron," says Frank, who has kept to it steadily, so he ought to know. "Here, you two fellows, take a slice each, will you?"

"Well,—it must only be a very small piece, then," says Val modestly.

"Nonsense, don't be a fine lady," says Jim, "here you

are," and a piece, certainly *not* a small one, finds its way to Val's plate.

"Then I must have some more tea," says Val.

As Val's cup passes up for the eleventh time, an audible titter, not polite perhaps, but excusable under the circumstances, passes with it, and Louisa almost repents of having asked so inveterate a tea-drinker. However her usual good-nature conquers this feeling, and she returns the cup with a pretty message of regret that the tea is not stronger, but she "sent the tea-caddy away by the servant, thinking she had finished with it."

The eleventh cup is also the last so far as Val is concerned. Aunt Lucy has been greatly wondering at the large appetites boys have, and that the *smaller* they are the more they are able to eat. When the meal is concluded Val keeps his eye well upon Louisa, and is so intent upon watching her movements, and measuring his distance from her, that he tumbles backwards into the arms of Aunt Lucy.

"Never mind," she says, as he makes his apologies; "I was looking for you, my dear. Come and sit down in the shade under this tree; the sun is too hot for my old eyes."

Val obeys. And strange to say he grows quite communicative, and finds the time pass so pleasantly in talking to the old lady that he is even sorry when the boys come and fetch him for a game of hide-and-seek. He feels no indignation at being called "my dear," indeed

he rather likes it from Aunt Lucy, and once when in the course of the conversation she says, "Don't let me keep you, my dear, if you would rather be elsewhere," he answers confidentially, "Oh no, it's only girls I don't like."

Strawberries-and-cream and a huge bowl of syllabub conclude the evening festivities; then the tired but happy people collect parties and get ready for returning home. The waggonette has come for the Grays, and Father is driving himself. Ted longs for the box seat, and for a wonder has his way, Stuart saying he'll "go inside for a change."

Aunt Lucy calls Val aside in a very mysterious way to wish him "Good-bye," and after he has shaken hands with her he feels some hard substance in the palm of his hand. It proves to be a golden sovereign!

Val's gratitude quite satisfies the old lady. He is certainly in a high state of glee, and he submits to be hovered over and chattered to by Louisa without a single rude word. He nearly makes up his mind that he'll never again call her "a little beast" for Aunt Lucy's sake, but when he reflects upon the knack Louisa has of rubbing him the wrong way, he thinks it wiser to make no resolutions.

Val intends to keep his secret to himself until he gets home, but he cannot help whispering it to Nannette, and once known to Nannette it is no longer a secret, but is loudly and joyfully proclaimed. The news creates a sensation, for Val is not, as a rule, a favourite.

"Can't understand it," says Stuart, "for you've no eyes, you know, Val!"

"No," says Val, "I haven't."

"One isn't surprised at anything happening to Ted, who has eyes of 'such a thrilling blue,' but you've no manners, Val, nor anything that one can see. What was the attraction?"

"My merits," replies Val with befitting gravity; "I rested solely on my merits."

"Val, my boy, always speak the truth," from Stuart.

"Honestly, Val?" from Laura.

"Val, you are cramming. Tell us how it really was," from Connie.

Val hesitates.

"Well," he says at last desperately, "you run a fellow so close, that he hasn't a chance, and if you must know, she said that I was awfully like a favourite nephew of hers named Edward, and—"

Val's account is interrupted by a chorus of voices, all chiming in so that one voice cannot be distinguished from another,—

"How very ugly he must have been."

But Val's good-humour is not to be disturbed by any amount of chaff. He holds his sovereign tightly in his hand, and pays no attention to the remarks that rain down thick and fast during the drive home.

And Aunt Lucy is ever after known among the Grays themselves by the title of—Val's Conquest.



CHAPTER VIII.

SIMPLE SIMON.

LESSONS are over for the day, and books are being gathered up and put by. The hall-door is shutting upon Mrs. Baker,—the girls' daily governess,—and Father is dismissing Stuart and Val. Ted he detains.

"I want you, Ted," he says, "to take this note for me after dinner. It is very important Mr. Berry should have it this afternoon, and you must wait and bring me back an answer. You are looking pale, my boy," and Father lays his hand affectionately upon Ted's chestnut curls, "perhaps the ride will do you good. You ought to go oftener for rides, Ted, now you have Mischief."

Ted smiles in answer, but he does not say that each day for the last week Mischief has been claimed by Stuart. Ted is anxious just at present about Stuart,

for he has several times seen the Pitchers prowling about the lane at the back of Veramede, and it is a private lane through which only people who have business there are supposed to come, such as tradespeople, messengers, and so on. And Ted cannot speak to Stuart about them, for Stuart never gives him a chance. He will have nothing to do with Ted that he can possibly help, and when he speaks to him it is in his coldest, most supercilious tones. Ted bears it all patiently, though his heart often aches over it; still with the spirit of content natural to him he hopes and feels sure that all will come right some day, and Stuart be the loving brother he never yet has been. It would ease Ted of his anxiety if he could have guessed that, by an accident, the whole truth has become known to Father, and that he is only waiting a little while longer to give Stuart a chance of even yet acknowledging his faults, before bringing matters to a crisis.

Ted starts directly after dinner, Rags and Tatters closely following at Mischief's heels. The ride lies through a very pretty country to a village about seven miles distant. Most of the way is through shady lanes, but the last half-mile is quite unsheltered, and here the sun striking fiercely down makes his power felt both by Ted, the horse, and the dogs.

The note is delivered, the four of them get rest and refreshment, and turn their faces homewards as fresh as when they started. But to-day the sun seems to burn

with almost an Eastern heat, and by the time they reach the welcome shelter of the lanes Rags and Tatters are panting as hard as ever, and Mischief's pace lags.

Ted lets him rest, strokes and pats his shaggy head, and then remembers that a little further on they pass a field through which runs a stream of water. Ted walks Mischief on until they reach the gate. Then he dismounts, unlatches the gate, and leads Mischief to the water which is only, a few paces from the gate. The stream is clear as crystal, and ripples gently over its pebbly bed, and through its green banks fringed with wild flowers.

Rags and Tatters eagerly quench their thirst, and Ted, looking at his watch, finds he has plenty of time at his disposal, and thinks they may as well stay where they are, and rest for a while. He flings himself down upon the grass and amuses himself by putting the two dogs through some tricks he has been teaching them. Rags has proved an apt scholar, but not so poor Tatters. He is so accustomed to follow Rags' lead that it is amusing to see the way in which he labours to imitate his quickerwitted brother. Rags does everything easily and gracefully, his bright eyes fixed upon his master as though he would read the orders before they are given. Tatters keeps one anxious eye fixed on Rags to see what he is to do, and how he is to do it, and his other eye he turns upon Ted in obedience to the command, "Steady, old boy, look at me," and with his attention so divided he

hardly ever succeeds. Ted is just putting them through their latest trick, that of "shouldering arms;" Rags is sitting erect and stiff like a thorough sentinel, as though he had been "born to it," the piece of stick held firm and upright against his shoulder, and himself ready to sit in that position all night, if his master requires it. Ted is attending now to Tatters, who falls down almost as soon as he is up, and who holds his stick so limply that it is continually slipping away from him. It is not poor Tatters' fault, but his misfortune, that he fails, you can tell that by the anxious expression of the eye turned upon Rags, and the beseeching expression of the eye turned upon Ted; "Don't be angry, please. I am not clever like Rags, but I am doing my best," Tatters' eye says this as plainly as if he had spoken it.

"Very well indeed," drawls a voice close by. "Very clever little dog that, young master."

Ted springs to his feet. He has been so occupied in Rags' and Tatters' education that he has heard no one approaching, and has not been aware that his exhibition has had an audience.

Leaning over the gate is a man, a horse standing by his side, whose bridle the man holds loosely in one hand: across the saddle is thrown a sack, and the sight of this makes Ted scan him to see if he is one of the Miller's men on an errand for the Miller. But he is not, unless he is a stranger hired for a day or two if extra help is required, and this Ted concludes to be the case. There

is something about him that fascinates Ted, and he cannot help staring more than is polite.

The man is of medium height, and dressed in a smock frock; his hair is very closely cut, and so light in colour that it looks powdered—the dust from the mill, thinks Ted—his skin is fair and painfully smooth and clear, not a wrinkle is there upon the whole surface of his face, not a line, not a mark; his cheeks are pink, and have the glazed appearance considered perfection in linen collars and cuffs; his expression is peculiar, it sounds Irish to say that it is no expression at all, but such is the fact; a blankness over all his features which give no indication of the owner's thoughts or feelings. A very wide mouth continually on the broad grin completes this portrait. He might be any age, certainly any age from eighteen to forty.

"I have it," thinks Ted to himself. "He is like the picture of Simple Simon in Violet's Rhyme Book."

He is so intent upon this discovery, and tracing out the likeness, that he pays no heed to the remark made by the man, and Simple Simon speaks again:

"Very clever little dog that, young master. Belongs to you, may be?"

"Yes, of course," answers Ted, somewhat haughtily, for he does not like the tone Simple Simon assumes. Then, fearing he has been giving himself airs, he adds more gently, "they are both my dogs."

"Answers to the name of what?" asked Simple Simon, coolly.

Ted is put upon his mettle, and drawing himself up, he answers with boyish impudence,

"They answer to the names I call them."

Not a change in Simple Simon's face—it might be painted wood-indeed the thought comes into Ted's mind of, "What a splendid Aunt Sally that fellow would make."

"'Tain't the first time I've seen him," says Simple Simon, beaming still upon Rags.

Ted's curiosity is aroused, and his pride forgotten.

"Where did you see him before?" he asks.

"Answers to the name of what?" says Simple Simon, stolidly.

"I told you before," replies Ted, "that he answers to the name I call him. I shall not give you any other answer. Now, if you please, will you move away from that gate? I want to go out."

Not an eyelid quivers, not a muscle moves; still beaming upon Rags, Simple Simon keeps his position, as though the request had never been uttered.

"Very clever little dog," he repeats admiringly, "oh, yes. I've seed him before. Say three bob, young master, say three bob," and Simple Simon jingles some coins in his pocket.

"Give you three shillings to let me through a gate open to everybody?" repeats Ted, indignantly. "Not I. I shall stay here until you move, and we will see who will tire first."

"Say three bob," drawls Simple Simon, perfectly unmoved, "three bob for the little dog, name unknown."

Ted looks Simple Simon straight in the face, his wonderful blue eyes flashing as they never have flashed before.

" What did you say?" he says.

"Say three bob for the little dog," sings Simple Simon, "name unknown."

"Look here," says Ted, "these dogs are quiet now because I told them to be so, but they are a plucky pair of animals, and if you don't move away from that gate, I'll tell them to hold you by the legs, until you are obliged to move."

"Very well," drawls Simple Simon stolidly as ever, but at the same time drawing a small pistol from his pocket. "And the first of them that stirs I'll shoot dead," and he levels his pistol at Rags, who shows his little white teeth in a prolonged growl, and Tatters growls in company. With a shiver Ted hushes them, and Simple Simon returns the pistol to his pocket.

"Keep them quiet," he says, his face just as unmoved as at first, and with that perpetual grin, "nice little dogs, but must be taught manners."

Ted looks around him. The field is fenced in by a high brambly hedge, and has no other outlet than the gate which Simple Simon is guarding so successfully. Ted wishes some one would come by, and then remembers that the lane is not a high road, and it may be

an hour or more before any one passes that way. He hardly knows what he fears, but he would give a great deal to be outside instead of inside the field; then he reasons with himself how silly this fear is, Simple Simon is only teasing him, and he *must* be a muff, a coward, as Stuart often calls him, to be so easily alarmed.

"Say four bob for the little dog, name unknown," again drawls Simple Simon. "I don't mind giving four bob for such a nice little dog as that."

"Thank you," replies Ted coolly, "but he is not for sale. When he is, I'll let you know."

"Answers to the name of what?" says Simple Simon as though he were prepared to wait all night, but he will get an answer. Ted does not reply. His blue eyes flash, his cheek crimsons, and turning upon his heel, he lifts his hat from his forehead and tosses back his chestnut curls to cool his hot brow.

Even though Ted has his back to Simple Simon, there is not the slightest change passes over his face as his eyes follow the boy's movements. Rags stretches himself and prepares to follow his Master, thinking very naturally that he must be going to mount preparatory to starting homewards. A click startles Ted and makes him turn round. Rags is crouching as though preparing for a spring, his eyes fierce, his white teeth gleaming, at the pistol levelled at his head. Ted thrown off his guard cries out,

"Quiet, Rags! lie down, old boy, quiet!" And Rags

lies down, his head resting between his forefeet, but a low growl escaping him every now and then as he keeps his eyes still fixed upon Simple Simon.

Even though Simple Simon has gained his point, and found out what he has been trying for so long, no change takes place in the expression of his face. Every feature remains the same.

"Nice little dog," he remarks, as he again re-pockets the pistol; "so you won't say four bob for the little dog, name not unknown?"

Again Ted does not reply. For the first time it occurs to him that Simple Simon has taken a great deal of trouble in his own peculiar manner to find out Rags' name. Can it be for any reason? "But for what reason?" argues Ted. "How silly I am getting. Anyhow I wish the fellow would be off his way, and leave me to be off mine."

"Then you won't say four bob for the nice little dog, name not unknown?" remarks Simple Simon, stolidly, and as though it were only the second time of asking.

"No," says Ted, decidedly, "I will not. He is not for sale at any price, as I told you before. And now will you move away from that gate, please? I want to go home." Ted asks politely, yet firmly. Simple Simon moves away a few paces; Ted glances inquiringly at him.

"They are nice little dogs," says Simple Simon. "But they *might* bite."

"Oh, if you are afraid," says Ted, much relieved, "you

had better go on first. I will take care they don't come after you."

And Ted joyfully springs upon the patient Mischief, and waits for Simple Simon to depart and leave the gate free for him to follow.

Simple Simon produces from somewhere a pockethandkerchief so large, that Ted thinks he must have taken the kitchen towel by mistake. Then Ted sees there is a smaller handkerchief inside the towel.

Simple Simon rubs his face with the towel, and then replaces the handkerchief inside, still keeping them in his hand.

"It's so welly hot," he says, as though apologizing for keeping Ted waiting. "Nice little dogs those; but dogs, even nice little dogs, have a trick of running after 'osses' heels and biting 'em."

"Then you want me to go first," says Ted, puzzled, as well he may be, at this round-about answer.

Simple Simon does not reply, except by opening the gate wide enough for Ted to pass through. Overjoyed to be quit of the field where he has been detained an unwilling prisoner, Ted whistles to the dogs and says quickly,

"To heel, Rags. To heel, Tatters. Steady, both." And the dogs follow obediently and quietly.

What happens next passes so quickly that Ted never can clearly explain how it did happen. Mischief is only just in the road, his head turned homewards, when there is a scuffle, a growl, a bark, a short cry of an animal in pain; Ted is off Mischief's back in an instant, but not quick enough for Simple Simon. That stolid, and to all appearance, immovable person is already mounting his horse, a sack slung over his back and a curly pepperand-salt tail peeping from the mouth of the sack. Ted springs forward, but Simple Simon cracks his whip and the horse trots on; Ted's hands which he threw before him grasping only empty air. Simple Simon looks back for an instant as he takes the sack from his shoulders and puts it in front of him; but there is no expression of triumph, only the same unwrinkled, smooth, meaningless rosy face, the same perpetual grin.

Ted notes this; sees too that Tatters is lying motionless, and to all appearance dead; then he springs upon Mischief and urging him into a gallop follows Simple Simon and the captive Rags.

Simple Simon's beast is an ungainly animal with very long thin legs; but though not much to look at it is soon proved that he is a good one to go. Those long legs stride over the ground at a pace that little Mischief's gallop—swift though it is—cannot overtake. And Mischief puts his best foot foremost, feeling with the loving instinct of animals that his Master, for some unknown reason that he cannot fathom, is bent upon his coming up with that long-legged ungraceful brute in front of them.

They are going away from home now towards Norton,

the village where Ted was sent with the note. The village is entered by a steep hill where Longlegs slackens speed, and up which he prepares to walk. Now Ted knows that Mischief can trot up this hill, and that without much inconvenience, and he feels that they will gain upon Simple Simon here, and be close enough to call for help as they pass through the village. Ted does not consider that so clever a capturer as Simple Simon has proved himself to be will hardly allow himself to be caught in so easy a way.

Longlegs walks up the hill leisurely, too underbred to dream of trotting. Mischief, when he gets to it, urged on by Ted's voice, lifts his sturdy short legs, and, with the pluck of a thoroughbred Welch pony, trots unweariedly up it. Simple Simon, who has been going stolidly on—looking neither right nor left, suddenly turns, takes a pistol from his pocket, and—fires it. He has only fired in the air, but it has the desired effect. Mischief, alarmed by the sudden, unknown noise so close to him, shies, for the first time since he came into Ted's possession.

Ted has been riding carelessly up the hill, his whole attention absorbed by Simple Simon, and the glimpses he gets of the sack containing the unfortunate Rags. The noise of the pistol and Mischief's shying startle him for the moment, and, before he can recover himself, Mischief rears straight in the air, turns round, and sets off at a frightened gallop home; while Ted suddenly

jerked from his seat and unable to disentangle his foot from the stirrup is dragged along, over ruts, over stones, until he loses sense and consciousness.

When Ted regains his senses he is lying down somewhere, a dreadful pain in his head, a bruised feeling in all his limbs. Everything that has passed is a blank, he sees nothing but the sky; hears nothing but a steady, familiar, munching sound. When he is able he raises himself upon his elbow and looks about him. He is lying in a ditch and Mischief is beside him quietly eating the roadside grass. Before he can remember anything he feels sick and giddy. He fights against the feeling desperately, but to no purpose. His arm gives way, his body falls back, and his head returns to its old resting-place amid stinging nettles and dockleaves. He is aware of a cold clammy nose—Mischief's nose—thrusting itself into his hand—and then all is blackness.



CHAPTER IX.

NURSE DREAMS.

WHEN Ted is next sensible of anything, it is of voices around him, and hands touching him. When he is able to open his eyes he sees he is lying in bed—not his own, but in Mother's Room.

No knowledge of what has taken place comes to Ted yet. He sees he is in Mother's Room, and he feels that that being the case he must be ill, and he tries to remember how it was he came to be ill, but the effort makes his head so unbearable that he can only shut his eyes and give up the attempt. After awhile the pain is better, then he opens his eyes again, and this time sees that Father, the Doctor, and Nurse are standing by the bedside.

Ted smiles faintly. "Have I been ill?" he asks.

"Yes," replies Father, bending over him; and the Doctor says,

"How is your head, my boy? Does it ache very much?"

"Yes," answers Ted, and he tries to move it.

"Lie quite still," says the Doctor, "don't stir. A fresh piece of ice, please, Nurse. Shut your eyes, Ted, and don't speak another word until I give you leave."

Ted obeys, and now he is able to feel how beautifully cold and refreshing the ice is to his hot brow. Still the pain does not get much better, and Ted falls into a half-conscious state. He does not sleep, he can hear now and then a low murmur of voices, but he cannot rouse himself to fuller consciousness. In this manner the whole of the night passes away.

When next he opens his eyes he feels much easier. Father, Nurse, and Doctor are by his bedside still, and the latter says,

- "How is your head this morning, my boy?"
- "Better, thank you," answers Ted.

"He will get on nicely now," says the Doctor, turning to Mr. Gray, and Ted hears and sees no more, for a delicious dreamy sensation comes over him quite unlike the feverish, unrestful confusion of his former dreamy state, and turning round upon his pillow with a smile of satisfied happiness, Ted falls fast asleep.

The next day he is so much better that, though still weak and languid, he is not inclined to sleep. He lies still, and watches what is going on in the room. The Doctor will not allow him to talk, and when he asks for Violet the answer is,

"You must be patient, Ted, the slightest excitement

is bad for you just now. You shall see them all when you are a little stronger."

And though Ted feels that Violet's clinging arms and velvet cheek would be rest—not excitement—he meekly submits, and tries to obey the Doctor's order and be patient.

Upon the sixth day after his accident he is able to be up and dressed and to lie upon the sofa, Mother's sofa upon which she used to lie, close to the open window. Up to this time he has neither thought nor asked anything about the circumstances of his illness, and since the first night when the wondering how he came to be in Mother's room brought on such an intolerable spell of pain, he has taken it as a matter of course that he should be ill, and it almost seems as though his fall has driven from his mind the memory of everything that had gone before. Every one is anxious to get to the bottom of the mystery, for all they know at present is, that Ted was found insensible lying at the bottom of a ditch, Mischief standing quietly by his side. Tatters was brought home afterwards in a miserably forlorn, dejected state. He was led by a boy, who said that he had discovered him by the roadside, quite stunned, and with a big lump upon his forehead as though he had been struck with the butt end of a whip. The boy knew him at once to be one of Master Ted's dogs, so he bathed his head with water which revived him, tied a piece of whip-cord to his collar, and brought him to Veramede. The boy added,

that the dog whined most piteously the whole way home. Of Rags there is not the faintest sign or trace, though search and inquiry have been made in every direction.

The Doctor says that Ted must be asked no questions, and that they must all wait until he remembers and tells them of his own accord.

To-day Ted has been taking a nap in the afternoon, and Nurse who is sitting in an arm-chair at the foot of the couch, overpowered most likely by the heat, falls asleep too.

Ted awakes. He is very cheerful and happy, for Violet has been with him for half an hour, the first of the children he has seen, though the Doctor holds out hopes of his seeing more of them to-morrow if he is as much better then as he is to-day. Ted looks amusedly at Nurse, her work has dropped from her hands, her head is thrown back, and she is snoring loudly. There is nothing to be had from her in the way of conversation, and Ted turns his attention to the garden.

A low cry at the door: Ted listens. The cry is repeated, and he holds his breath. Another cry louder than the others and accompanied by a scratching, feeble at first, then more decided.

For a moment Ted is spell-bound. Then there comes back to his memory in one rush all the events he had forgotten. Simple Simon; Rags' capture; his pursuit; Mischief's plunge; and then his fall. Everything is as

clear to him in that one single instant as though the events had taken place this very afternoon.

Once more the whining and scratching. Ted lifts himself gently from the couch and helps himself along by the pieces of furniture. He opens the door very quietly, and admits—whom? Not Tatters?

It is impossible that this can be Tatters.

It is a miserable shadow of a dog, one that—excepting that he is clean—might have been picked up in a gutter. His bones are nearly through his skin; his coat is thin and unkempt, the uneven hair hanging loosely over his body; his tail, a mere ghost of a tail, is tucked between his legs; his ears fall limply over his face; his eyes are dull and lustreless; his whole appearance is miserable in the extreme. He looks like a dog that has dragged out a wretched existence at the heels of a travelling tinker. Oh, it is quite impossible that this can be Tatters.

Tatters is a Scotch terrier of birth—a dog to be proud of. A glossy pepper-and-salt coat, which it was Ted's delight to comb smooth and even, hangs thickly over a body, well clothed with comfortable flesh, through which the sharp, objectionable bones never protruded; his tail is curly and graceful, and he keeps it stiff and erect as a dog should who is worth a second look: his eyes are brown and bright; his well-shaped ears are thrown back from his face; his head is proudly lifted; his nose sniffs the air as he trots briskly along.

Such is Tatters? Alas! Such was Tatters. And the

dog that crawls into the room and lays himself, as much as there is left of him, skin and bones, at Ted's feet, is—Tatters.

Yes, there is no doubt of it, it is Tatters. He rests his chin caressingly upon his master's foot, and gives a feeble flutter of the tail, *meant* for a wag, but very unlike the windmill motion which was wont to be his greeting.

"Oh, Tatters," says Ted, "poor Tatters! Where is Rags? Shall we never see Rags again?"

At the mention of Rags, Tatters sets up a prolonged howl, which completes Ted's wretchedness. He sits down upon the floor and gathering Tatters in his arms, he lays his head upon the dog's head, and sobs aloud.

Nurse dreams. She is walking by the sea-side, listening to the plashing of the waves upon the shingles, when there comes to her a man in Highland dress, who offers to play her a "toon upon his bag-pipes for a penny." Nurse waves him away; the man persists: Nurse turns to leave him as he will not leave her, "Play you a toon for a penny, mum;" Nurse runs, the man after her: "Play you a toon for nothing, mum," and the discordant instruments, reminding one painfully of tooth-ache, begin, squeak, screech, squeak—

Nurse awakes. Ted is sitting in a heap upon the floor, hugging to him the wreck of skin and bone calling itself by the name of—Tatters; the Master is sobbing, the dog howling. No wonder Nurse dreamt of bag-pipes.

It is some time before Ted is comforted. He has out

his fit of crying and then leans exhausted amongst his pillows. Tatters lies still and motionless at the foot of the couch. Ted looks anxiously out of the window which faces the drive, for Father's return. Mr. Gray is a magistrate, and business, connected with his duties, has taken him from home to-day. But Ted knows that directly he comes back he will make his way to Mother's room, and Ted will be able to pour his story into his ear. To relieve his mind and pass away the time, Ted tells it to Nurse, who listens open-mouthed. She is dumb with surprise at first, and when she recovers speech she plies him with questions interspersed with exclamations, "Bless us! You don't say so! Never heard the like. Well, Master Ted, you do surprise me!" And so on.

At length there is silence. Nurse is pondering over Ted's adventure, and wishing Mr. Gray would come that she may go and enlighten the school-room party, who are panting to know the cause of Ted's accident, for, that it could not have happened from natural causes is evident to all, from the fact of Rags' disappearance, and the cruel blow received by Tatters.

Ted's thoughts are with Rags, his eyes often filling with tears as he recalls his engaging ways, his cleverness, and many good qualities. He sees Rags' bright brown eyes now fixed upon him; now wistfully pleading for some delicacy; now lovingly asking for caresses; now quick and eager at the prospect of a walk. Ted never knew until he lost him, how much better loved by him

Rags is than Tatters. The memory of the little fellow comes before him, sitting upright, with the stick held firmly against his shoulder; his bright eyes searching Ted's face; his head held a little on one side; his whole attitude fixed, and attentive to Ted's slightest word. At the thought of this, something very like a sob escapes Ted's lips and attracts the attention of Nurse. She gives him a gentle scolding, and seeing that it is bad for him to think, she talks to him about one thing and another until Mr. Gray comes home and takes her place.

Father is a sympathizing listener to Ted's story, but he does not hold out much hope that Rags will ever be recovered. It is a week since the capture, and by this time the man may be in any part of England, or perhaps not in England at all. Ted's own sense has told him this, but it is with an aching heart that he hears it confirmed by Father's lips.

"Poor Tatters," says Ted, laying his hand upon Tatters' drooping head. "We shall never see Rags again, never again, old Tatters!"

And Tatters, at the mention of Rags' name, sets up a like melancholy howl that greeted it before.

"You must not brood over this, Ted," says Father, anxiously, "or you will bring back the pain in your head, and a second attack will be more serious than the first."

"If I knew where Rags is at this moment," says Ted, great tears gathering in his large blue eyes, "if I only

knew that he is well-treated and cared for, but that man—"

And Ted shudders at the thought of the unkindness, not to say cruelty, Rags may even now be undergoing.

"Ted," says Father, "my opinion of the matter is this—The man saw Rags' cleverness and aptitude for learning tricks, and was seized with a desire to possess him, perhaps to sell again, or perhaps to exhibit. I should say the latter. And in that case I do not think that Rags will be *ill-treated*, it would not be to the man's advantage to ill-treat an animal that was useful to him. I do not say that Rags will be made so much of, or be petted like he was when in your possession. But I really do think he is safe from absolute ill-treatment."

Ted sighs, and Father is grieved to see his cheeks flush and his eyes growing momentarily brighter, with the excitement of thinking over poor Rags' probable fate.

"I shall prescribe for you myself to-day," says Father, laying a cool hand upon Ted's brow. "The Doctor said you might see some of the school-room party to-morrow. Now I shall take the matter into my own hands and send one of them to drink tea with you to-night. Only you must promise not to talk too much, and, above all, not to excite yourself. Now, which of them shall it be?"

Ted considers for a moment. "Val, please, Father," he says.

"Very well," answers Father with a smile, which is quickly followed by a sigh. He is thinking perhaps of

Stuart, and the anxiety his conduct is causing. No wonder it should be Val and not Stuart Ted chooses.

Val is sensible of the honour done him. Not having seen Ted for a whole week, and being somewhat impressed by his adventure, his first impulse is to dress for him as for a stranger. Upon second thoughts, however, he dismisses this idea and contents himself with an extra amount of scrubbing and brushing.

When Val's shiny comical face, and well-brushed scanty locks, appear at the door of Mother's Room, Ted hails him with relief. And Val, who has been well schooled by Father, is hopeful and cheerful, and when bed-time comes Ted is so much calmer and better, that Father congratulates himself upon the success of his prescription.



CHAPTER X.

"LE SOMMEIL DE L'ENFANT JESUS."

"PLEASE, sir," says Nurse, coming into Mr. Gray's study that same evening in a great flurry, "will you come to Master Ted? he is in such a taking, I can't do nothing with him."

Mr. Gray rises hastily. "You go to your supper, Nurse," he says, "I will call you if I want you."

Ted is very different from when Father left him an hour or more ago. Then he was tired, but calm and quiet, just preparing to go to bed, and seeming disposed to sleep. Now his cheeks are scarlet, his eyes glassy bright, and his chestnut curls are tossing restlessly about upon his pillow.

"My dear boy," says Father tenderly, "what is the matter? You promised me you would not excite yourself, and when I left you, you seemed to think you should sleep well to-night. Ted, consider. No amount of

fretting will bring back poor Rags, and it is wrong of you to do so much harm to yourself by worrying about——"

"Oh, Father," says Ted, interrupting and speaking in a shrill, tired voice, "but I can't, oh, Father, I can't say my prayers."

"Ted," says Father, bending over him, "your head is aching, is it not?"

"Beginning to ache," answers Ted; "it's thinking about my prayers, I suppose."

"But why cannot you say them?" asks Father.

Ted buries his face entirely in the pillow, and makes no reply.

"Tell me," says Father gently, "just as you would have told Mother if she had been here."

Ted turns upon his back, his lovely blue eyes dilating in agony as he fixes them upon Father's face.

"I can't say my prayers," he repeats piteously, "I can't say, 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.' I can't, oh, I can't forgive that man,—the man who stole Rags!"

"Can you not?" asks Father, still more gently. "Oh, Ted, think upon what you are saying. Our dear LORD as He hung upon the Cross in the midst of sufferings greater than we can imagine prayed for those who were mocking Him and torturing Him. He prayed for His *murderers*, and left us 'an ensample that we should follow in His steps.' Think of this, my boy, and it will soften you and help you to resist the temp-

tation to unforgiving thoughts which is assailing you now."

But Ted only tosses first to one side, then to another, that restless head of chestnut curls that seems as though it never would lie still.

"I thought about that," he wails despairingly, "and then whenever I knelt down to say my prayers all that went away from me, and I could only think of-of Rags and—the man who stole him. I shut my eyes tight, but I saw it so plain—the man getting up upon his horse with the sack thrown across his back, and a piece of-of -Rags' tail just curling over the mouth of the sack. And then I felt I hated the man, and then—and then it all came over again!" and Ted ends with a sob.

"You are not in a fit state to think at all, or argue it out with yourself," says Father. "Gop will accept your prayers if you really wish to forgive the man. Don't dwell too much upon your feelings-"

"But Father," interrupts Ted, so excited, so restless that he cannot listen, "I can't feel,—it is all blackness and horribleness. I can't feel God, and I can't even think about Him. Oh, Father, suppose I should die before I forgive that man," and as Ted clutches hold of Father's arm with both hands, the strained agonising look of those big blue eyes is pitiful to see.

It is evident that Ted is far too excited for any reasoning to avail; and Father changing his tone speaks with authority as he arranges the tumbled bed-clothes, and tells him to "lie quite still and not speak another word." Then he rings the bell, and bids Nurse send a messenger at once for the Doctor. When he looks round after giving directions he finds that Ted has fainted.

The messenger has not far to go, for he meets the Doctor coming up the drive. He has come to speak to Mr. Gray upon some unexpected business, and he hastens when he hears that he has been sent for.

When Ted recovers from his fainting fit he is quite delirious, and knows no one. The Doctor, after he is told all that has gone before, looks very grave and decides to remain in the house all night.

"The fever runs very high," he says, "and this relapse is worse than the first illness. I do not conceal from you that there is cause for great anxiety. The morning may bring a change, and we will hope for the best."

But after a night of careful, loving watching and nursing, the morning dawns upon even less hope than the night had closed upon. There is a faint chance of Ted's life, but it is so faint that they hardly like to dwell too much upon it. Ted is delirious still, tossing that restless, aching head to and fro, flinging off the bed-clothes, and talking wildly, never connectedly, of many things, but mostly going over and over in broken sentences the trouble that had worried him and been the cause of his relapse. It is so piteously that he murmurs again and again, "Oh, I cannot say my prayers," and "I can't forgive the man, oh! what shall I do?" Father's heart

aches to hear him, and he oftentimes walks to the other end of the room, to be out of the sight of those strained, wistful, gentian eyes,—out of the hearing of that piteous voice he cannot get.

Tatters lies stretched along at the foot of Ted's bed, and no one has the heart to send him away.

There is not much work done in the school-room today. The tidings of Ted's danger fills them all with consternation. To Stuart the news brings an additional weight, which the others have not to bear,—his unkindness and coldness, especially of late, to the unselfish brother who has borne it all with such unfailing gentleness. Then too, the voice of Conscience makes itself felt, and gradually, little by little, is unfolded to him the sense of his wrong-doing. Up to now he has wilfully shut both eyes and ears, and would not allow himself to pause for a moment to think over the deceitful course he has been pursuing. But in the awful hush and stillness that pervades the house during this day of suspense—a stillness that reminds them all of the great stillness and hushed voices when the Angel of Death was really among them—he has ample time to reflect upon his conduct, and to make a firm resolution to break off at once with his bad companions, and the first opportunity he has to tell his Father everything.

And now that they are upon the eve may be of losing Ted, how much they miss him, how deeply they feel his value. There is not one of the hearts that does not throb with many a pang of reproach as they recollect how often they have snubbed Ted; treated him with contempt; set him on one side; accepted his services when they required them as a right, and then ungratefully requited them. And his unfailing love, sweet temper, and unselfishness have been his only reply to them day by day, hour by hour. Their thoughts all take one direction, though outwardly they act very differently.

Laura sits at the table doing some crochet work, and looking so much the same that no one would imagine how bitterly she is reproaching herself for the coldness and want of sympathy with which she has always met Ted's ready obedience to her commands,—and boys of his age are not as a rule disposed to be obedient to a sister not four years older than themselves,—and his good-nature in sparing her all the trouble he could. And though Laura's fingers perform their task, the tears lie very near her eyes, as over and over again the same thoughts in a different form come back to her.

Stuart is restless, and makes no pretence of settling to anything. He paces up and down the room, moves things about, and finally takes himself off, and is seen no more for some time to come.

The others are not so reserved. Nannette has sobbed and sobbed, until she can sob no more, and now she is leaning back in the rocking-chair, her eyes red and swollen, her cheeks tear-stained and deeply red, her hair rough and sticking out in every direction, and her dress a mass of crumples from being continually squeezed in her hot hands as a relief of her feelings. But for once Laura takes no notice of her appearance.

Val is in one of the window-seats huddled together in a heap, and it requires some close looking to discover which is his head, which are his hands, and which are his knees.

Connie is sitting upon the floor resting her head wearily against the other window-seat, and seeming more washed out than usual from the quantity of tears she has shed.

Nannette makes the first move. She passes to the heap gathered upon the window-seat, and touches it. "Come out to the summer-house, Val," she whispers. The heap uncurls itself and returns to the form of Val. Always small, grief makes him seem smaller. Such a little puckered-up face, such a dejected woe-begone manner, such a shrunk-into-nothing figure! He needs a second glance before we can recognise in him the trim Val, with the comically ugly face, and the self-confident manner.

Connie looks up wistfully.

"Yes, come along, Connie," says Nannette, and the three go quietly out.

In the summer-house Nannette gives full vent to the feelings that indoors she expended in tears.

"Oh, Val, Val," she sobs, "if we'd only been kinder

to Ted! And now suppose he should die, and we never have a chance of making it up to him! Oh dear! if only we had thought more about him, and he was always so good to us. Do you know, Val, I was thinking just now that though he is always giving me presents, I don't believe I've ever given him anything in my life. Have you?"

"A knife once," says Val gruffly, "but that was only because it wasn't any use to me, and I told him he might have it."

"Then that's as good as nothing," says Nannette.

"Oh dear! if Ted only gets better I'll be so kind to him, I'll do anything for him, I'll never say an unkind word to him again, never, never!"

"He won't get well," says Val despairingly; "there is no chance of it."

"Oh, Val," says Nannette, drawing a deep breath; "you know that Nurse said the Doctor said there is just the least hope that he may get better."

"Oh yes," says Connie sobbing. "Oh, he *must* get better."

"He won't," mutters Val, who is sitting the picture of dogged despair, his elbows planted on his knees, and his chin resting on his hands. "It's like our luck, he'll never get better."

"Oh, Val!" says Nannette, much shocked; "how wicked of you to talk like that. It is wrong—downright wicked—to talk of luck! It is——"

"Shut up," growls Val; "I'll say what I like."

"One would think you were not sorry," begins Nannette indignantly; then as she takes in the change in Val's appearance, she ends by saying, "Oh, Val, don't make me more unhappy than I am already."

But Val turns upon her fiercely.

"You think one isn't sorry because one doesn't jabber about it. It's only girls who jabber. I tell you what, Nannie, I'd give anything for the time to come over again,—I've been a *beast*?" And this little outburst over, Val settles down into his former dejected attitude.

Val has called himself "a beast,"—Nannette is satisfied, for it is the strongest expression of abhorrence to be found in Val's dictionary.

"It's all of us," says Nannette; "we've all of us snubbed the poor boy. I've been the worst of all;" and Nannette rocks herself to and fro, while Connie sobs.

"You haven't," says Val, "I've been the worst."

"No, I've been the worst," sobs Connie.

"Well, it's no use squabbling about that," answers . Nannette. "Oh dear, if we only get a chance of making it up to him."

"We shan't," sighs Val; "he is sure to die."

"I don't know why you should say that, Val," says Nannette; "it is much righter and better to hope that God will make Ted well, than to keep on saying that he is sure to die."

"He's too good to live," says Val, speaking lackadaisically, and very much through his nose.

"Oh!" says Nannette, a new light breaking upon her, "who told you that, Val?"

And then out comes a story very much what Nannette had imagined even before it is told.

Val is a dreadful old gossip, and no amount of chaff has been able to cure him of the propensity. This morning he "chanced to be passing the kitchen while the servants were at breakfast, and finding they were talking about Ted he went in to hear what they had to say.

"They never thought the dear boy could live. He was much too good to live. Those very good children never lived to grow up. He favoured his dear mamma too much for that." They knew there was going to be a death in the house, for "Anna Maria had seen a raven fly over the house; Cook had heard a dog howl, and the death-watch beat; and Elizabeth had been awakened the night before by three loud and distinct knocks at the door." Then each of them had some stories to tell which proved how, in like cases, these signs had been always followed by a death. Val listened to the mysterious whispers, the solemn shakes of the head, until his "flesh crept," and he stole away to brood over them until he reduced himself to his present state of dull, gloomy despair.

As the recountal is ended, told in Val's most tragic

tones, Nannette breaks into one of her loud bursts of laughter.

The shocked looks of Val and Connie soon recall her to the thought of what she has done; and angry and amazed at herself for having, even for a moment, forgotten herself, she changes suddenly into tears and ends by becoming quite hysterical.

Val and Connie are alarmed, the Grays being a family not given to hysterics, but they have wit enough to try the only two remedies that occur to them. Val thumps Nannette hard on the back, and Connie runs and fetches some water.

By the time the water arrives, Nannette is so far recovered as to be able to drink it, and after a while she speaks in her natural voice.

"Do you know, Val," she says, "I think it is wicked to look at things like that. If God wanted to tell us He was going to take away Ted, He wouldn't send a knock, or a bird, or an insect. He has so many Angels, and if He wanted to tell us He could easily spare one of them."

Val is silent.

"And," continues Nannette, "did you listen to the sermon on Sunday, Val?"

"No," says Val grimly, "never do."

"This was so plain," says Nannette, "and it was about this very thing. At least it said that God does not tell us things that are going to happen, because He

wants us to *trust* Him. If we know everything that is going to happen, and *why* it is that things happen, then there is no need to trust God, is there?"

"I suppose not," says Val, seeing he is expected to answer.

"But we don't know," continues Nannette, "and so we are to trust and to say that 'everything that happens is for the best.' Now, Val, it isn't trusting God to say that Ted is sure to die because a raven has flown over the house. It is trusting Him much more if we say that He can make Ted well and that He will if we pray to Him with all our might."

Val faces Nannette admiringly.

"You speak like a book," he says. "I never knew you thought about that sort of thing."

"I haven't," says Nannette, "but I mean to. Oh, Val, I wonder why it is that one can't get good all in a minute."

"It's our nature, I suppose," replies Val, reflectively.

"I know that if I live to a hundred and go on trying all the time I shall never be good, I shall only be trying to be good."

"That sounds Irish," says Val.

"Yes," says Nannette, knitting her brow, "but I know what I mean myself. And I can't always get hold of words that mean what I want them to say."

Anna Maria calling them to dinner, puts a stop to the conversation, but Val is certainly more hopeful than when

they came out, and Nannette finds that in cheering him she has also cheered herself. Yet the news of Ted is still "no better."

And "no better" he continues the whole of the afternoon and evening. Late in the evening the Doctor goes down stairs for some refreshment, leaving orders that he is to be called if any change takes place. Father and Nurse are left, the latter in an arm-chair, tired out and nearly asleep, the former sitting by the bedside watching the restless uneasy slumbers of his boy. The whole day has been passed in delirious tossings and incoherent talking; not for one moment has he been sensible.

In time the sleep gets calmer, and Father looks thankfully at him. Another minute, and he sees that Ted's eyes are open, a very faint smile is on his lips, and he speaks in low tones, but in his natural voice.

"Please, Father, will you let me look at that photograph, 'Le Sommeil de l'Enfant Jesus?'"

Father fetches it, the photograph given him upon his birthday and framed in its pretty oak frame. He holds it in front of the boy who gazes earnestly at it. The Face of the Child-Christ as He lies upon the ground asleep, the Holy Angels keeping their lowly, reverent watch, is beautifully sweet, and fair, and gentle. And Ted shutting his eyes carries his thoughts onward to the Hill of Calvary. The Face that haunts him is the same, though the scene has changed—the same sweet, serene,

loving Face of Jesus the Child, that Face so Divinely fair, so perfect in form and expression. But instead of the quiet, adoring Angels, the cruel, mocking scoffers; instead of the lullaby of His Mother with which she hushed Him to sleep, the jeers and laughter of an unfeeling crowd; instead of the cool air and fresh breezes, the hot burning heat of an Eastern sun; instead of the soft grass, the hard bed of the Cross; instead of a refreshing sleep, tortures prolonged for weary hours, until they ended in the sleep of Death. Yet in the midst of all, and plainly heard even above the shouts of the soldiers, the laughter and the clamour of the people, there is the patient unruffled Voice, "FATHER, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The picture fades away, and Ted opens his eyes upon the photograph still held before him.

"Thank you," he says, "I don't want it now. Oh, Father, I have forgiven the man, and said my prayers. After all, he didn't know I cared so much for Rags, and perhaps he'll treat him kindly—poor Rags."

The entrance of the Doctor prevents more being said. Ted is better, but not out of danger, and the only thing to be done is to wait with patience. The Doctor thinks no change will come before morning, and leaves, saying he shall return in a few hours. Father tells Nurse to sleep, and he watches alone, undisturbed except by the deep breathing of Nurse, and the moaning of the suffering boy.

The pain is very great, and even the constant change of the ice upon the forehead does not seem to give much relief. Ted's head, its chestnut curls tossed and tangled, presses deep into the pillow as it turns first one way, then the other, trying to ease the intolerable aching, or at any rate, still the throbbing of the brow. Father is suffering hardly less than Ted himself at the knowledge that he is unable to alleviate his sufferings.

"My poor boy," he says at last with tears in eyes and voice, "I wish I could bear this for you."

Ted's beautiful blue eyes have deepened into violet with the intensity of the pain; his forehead is wrinkled, his cheeks are scarlet, and his underlip is quivering. It quivers more as he tries to smile, but he answers bravely,

"It is not so very very bad, Father. It does not hurt me half so much as the Crown of Thorns hurt *Him.*"

Father follows the direction of Ted's eyes. They rest upon a large-sized engraving of the Ecce Homo hung over the mantleshelf. There is the beautiful upturned Face so calmly majestic in the midst of Its agony: there are the cruel thorns, plucked from the Judas tree, long and sharp, their points pressed deeply into the furrowed Brow,—"Oh, no!" continues Ted, "it does not hurt much now, Father."

Father walks to the window. The grey clouds are lifting, and the first faint golden streaks are appearing in the East. He watches them deepen from faint gold into bright gold, from bright gold into deeper gold. Then he

sees them widen and change from gold into orange, from orange into crimson, from crimson into blood red. The sun is getting up, and has sent the rosy-hued clouds to tell the news. Father gazes for some minutes, hardly seeing anything, for the tears that dim his eyes, then he turns again to the bedside of his boy.

A messenger has come to Ted in the dawning of this fair summer day. The chestnut head lies quiet upon his pillow, the quivering of the lip is stilled: the wrinkles have gone from the broad forehead which is now smooth and serene as usual. The trembling attempt at cheerfulness has given place to the happy smile of former days. The face is turned to the window, and one hand supports his cheek; the other hand rests upon the counterpane.

Father bends over him. The breath comes faint, but regular and even. Ted is sleeping a life-giving healthful sleep, and the Messenger who has brushed him with his wing in the lifting of this golden day is—the Angel of Life.



CHAPTER XI.

VAL'S SECRET.

MICHAELMAS. And that means a great deal. It means holidays—a week at the very least—nutting excursions, water expeditions, blackberrying, applegathering; the first of the foot-ball, the last of the cricket. Michaelmas is a catching hold of Summer's mantle before she quite frees herself from our grasp; it is the basking oneself a little longer in her smile which, even while we enjoy it, we feel is not nearly so genial and so bright as it used to be.

These are Stuart's first holidays, and he is received with due honour at Veramede. He has made a fresh start at school—the same school to which most of his friends in the neighbourhood go—and he is trying hard to be upright and honourable, and to retrace the steps that he had lost in the great Battle of Life.

Val is perhaps the one who least looks forward to

Stuart's Michaelmas holidays. "There will be no putting up with him," he murmurs privately to Nannette. "He was bad enough before he went away, and now he'll be cock of the walk, and no mistake. There'll be no putting up with him; it will be something dreadful. I wish Father would let me go to school."

"That we might have two cocks of the walk instead of one," answers Nannette, laughing.

Nannette is more civilized. Aunt Laura's gentle advice, and bright way of setting her to rights, are very different from what Nannette terms "Laura's nagging." Nannette never will be the picture of neatness Laura is, for it is not her nature, but she is less like a scaramouch and more like everybody else. She wears her masses of hair, her lion's mane, in two long plaits or pigtails tied at the ends with ribbon, and she finds it much less in her own and other people's way. Nor does she so often look as though she came out of a clothes-bag.

Do not suppose that Nannette gets tidy all in an instant. Far from it. She herself says that where she remembers once, she forgets a dozen times; but she has a brave, hopeful spirit, and when she is down she picks herself up again and makes a fresh start. "I can't do things right," she says often to herself, "but at any rate I'll try." And it seems to me that the best that the most perfect can do is—to try.

Stuart is quite satisfied with the welcome he receives, and if Val's is rather less warm, he does not find it out.

Contrary to Val's expectation he has improved, as that young gentleman slowly and carefully acknowledges. School is the best place in the world for rubbing off that superciliousness which was such a drawback to Stuart's otherwise gentlemanly manner. It has quite disappeared now, and if there is a slight disposition to patronize, upon the strength of what he has seen and heard, it is accompanied by such good-nature and unconsciousness, that even Val cannot find much fault.

Ted receives the heartiest greeting from Stuart, at which none of them grumble, for since his illness he is in danger of becoming, what Violet has hitherto been, the family pet. He has grown taller, slimmer, paler, and is still delicate enough to give them an excuse for taking care of him and being anxious to spare him any unnecessary fatigue. It is a good thing, as the Gray family seem given to rushing into extremes, that Ted himself is not inclined to coddle.

"Poor Tatters," says Stuart, stooping to caress the shadow lying in a patch of sunshine on the carpet. "Why don't you take heart and look up a bit?"

Tatters does not respond. He is lying in his usual position, his chin resting on his fore feet, not asleep, but his eyes wide open gazing blankly before him. He is even thinner if that were possible; Connie in a resigned voice says, "that now he can't get thinner, unless like Augustus, who refused his bread-and-milk, he vanishes altogether." In vain Tatters is tempted with the choicest

delicacies and the juiciest bones—bones far superior to the one over which he and Rags had their first and only quarrel—the dainty morsels, the juicy bones, lie unheeded by his side. He eats just enough to keep him alive—no more—and he drags himself about the garden after Ted, but when Ted goes for a walk or ride he lies before the door at the top of the steps, watching for his return.

"I say, Stuart," says Val, anxiously, when they are assembled at tea, the evening of Stuart's arrival, "do you think I have grown?"

"No," says Stuart, "I don't think you have. But you seem to consider it such a long time that I have been away. It is only two months, and you can't expect to grow much in two months."

"Can't you?" answers Val. "Look at Ted, how he has shot up. Oh, if I were only as tall as you are, Ted, how happy I should be," he continues, enviously.

"People generally grow when they are ill," says Father.
"You had better take to your bed, Val, and see what that will do for you."

Val sighs. "Nothing makes me grow," he says, pathetically. "Simon declared that if I went out in the rain a great deal I should be sure to grow, because he said that 'after rain plants sprung up wonderful.' And if I haven't been out in every drop of rain this last ten weeks. Four times I've been drenched through and through, to say nothing of the times I've been pretty well wet, and

now, Stuart doesn't see that I've grown. Simon's an old humbug."

"Oh, Val, Val!" says Aunt Laura, when she has recovered her gravity. "If you are such a goose as to believe such nonsense, Simon shall nurse you next time you catch cold, not I. So that is the reason I've had you twice laid up with colds at a time of year when no one ought to have them. And you took them so unusually quietly! I suppose you were comforting yourself with the idea that you were growing all the time. Oh, Val, Val!"

Val looks somewhat foolish, and repents of his rashness, in letting out his secret, for the others do not spare him, and he feels it will be some time before it is forgotten.

- "Anything going on?" asks Stuart, when Val is left at peace for the present.
 - "Louisa is going to give a party," says Nannette.
- "Shut up with Louisa Selina Clementina," growls Val. "Who wants to hear about her?"
- "I do for one," says Stuart, briskly, "if she is going to give a party."
- "Oh, Val," says Ted, "how unkind of you to be so ungrateful to Louisa. It was at her party you made your first conquest."
- "Eh," says Val, much mollified, "and if the old lady is going to be there, I don't mind going."
 - "Wait until you're asked," is the general shout.

"I don't think you will be," says Stuart, "not at any rate if Louisa pours out tea. Oh, Val, I've never ceased to wonder how you *could* drink so many cups of tea."

Val, much flattered, grins, and while Laura is telling the story to their aunt, he says,

"Oh, Stuart, such a cricket match to wind up with. The county boys against Thirwall grammar school, you know. The ground is fixed upon at Marston, because they say it's central, and easily got at by train. It is to be the 29th and 30th, Tuesday and Wednesday. Oh, we're sure to get the best of it; hurrah!"

"Halloo," says Stuart, "you don't mean to say that you are going to play?"

Val looks as modest as it is possible for the owner of that very turned-up nose, and that *very* jaunty manner—to look.

"They asked me," he says, "but," he continues honestly, "it was Ted they asked first, only Father thought he wasn't strong enough just yet."

"Oh," says Ted, with a stifled sigh, "I should have liked so much. But go on, Val, don't keep anything back, my boy."

Val clears his throat, and Nannette pats him encouragingly on the back.

"They said that if I wasn't such a good bowler as Ted, that my running was worth something, and so—and so——"

"They hoped Mr. Valentine Gray would give his valuable services and join the forthcoming cricket match," finishes Father. "I should like you to have seen Val's and Connie's faces, Stuart, when the invitation came to the supper. Mr. Rolf is going to give them a supper at his house on the Wednesday night. The invitation was addressed in grand style to 'V. Gray, Esq.' Val hardly knew himself, and I believe to this day Connie doubts whether it was not a mistake."

Connie laughs. "You and Ted are going to the supper, Stuart," she says.

"Chaperoned by Val," says Aunt Laura. "Mr. Rolf hoped that Mr. Valentine Gray would bring his two brothers. Ah, Val, I caught you! drawing yourself up, and making yourself taller than you really are!"

"Trying to do so," says Father. "Now if little Lump of Delight has quite finished her bread-and-milk, we will say grace and go into the garden to enjoy this lovely evening."

This is Saturday, and upon Monday Val takes himself off by train to Marston to investigate the ground and work off a little of his superfluous excitement. There goes with him another boy about three years older than himself, Alan Grant by name, who is also to play in the match.

When they come back, Stuart, in company with Harry, Jim, and Frank Rostrum, is lounging upon the lawn under the shade of a beech tree. Val and Alan turn their steps in that direction. Stuart looks lazily at them when he sees them coming.

"I wonder what's up now," he says.

"What should be 'up?" inquires Harry.

"Look at Val," says Stuart briefly.

There is an air of solemn importance about Val, noticeable in the pursed-up lips, and the comical gravity of his always comical face. Most people can tell when anything is "up" with Val.

"Where's Ted?" he asks mysteriously, speaking almost in a whisper.

"Gone to fetch something, he'll be back directly. What do you want him for, and what is the matter?" asks Stuart.

For answer Val with the same tragic air puts a paper in Stuart's hand.

Stuart glances over it, then tosses it carelessly aside.

"What do you suppose I want with *that?*" he says disappointedly and somewhat crossly. "Go by all means if your tastes lie that way, Val,—*mine* don't."

Val picks up the paper, his temper unruffled.

"What is it?" ask the other boys, all except Alan, who bieng in the secret looks at Val, and smiles knowingly.

"Oh, some affair or other that Val wants to patronise," answers Stuart, yawning. "Read it out, Val, and then everybody can hear what it is."

With the same solemn air and manner Val reads-

"Great Attraction.
For Two Days Only,
September the 28th and 29th.

MONSIEUR DOLIBRE

Will hold an Exhibition in the Field adjoining the Cricket Field,

Where will be shown to the Public his Worldfamed Dogs. The same as were exhibited before HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN.

Including the greatest Marvel of the Age,

THE WONDERFUL CLOWN DOG, Now for the first time exhibiting in England.

Price of Admission, Sixpence. The Performance to commence at Seven o'clock.

N.B.—A few seats at One Shilling each will be reserved for the Quality."

"Don't go, Val," says Harry; "depend upon it it will be no end of a sell, my boy."

"Stuart," says Val, paying no heed to this advice, and pointing with his finger to something in the bill from which he has been reading, he whispers a word or two in Stuart's ear.

Stuart, much excited, springs to his feet, and catches hold of Val.

"Are you *sure?*" he says. "Upon your word and honour, Val, this is no cram?"

"I should not cram about a thing like this," says Val in an injured voice. "Ask Alan if you don't believe me." Stuart stands thoughtful and silent for a minute. "Don't tell Ted," he says: "oh, there he is coming. Val, run off and keep him away from us upon some excuse or other. Mind, don't breathe a word of this," and then, seeing that Val looks disappointed, he adds hurriedly, "I'll tell you why and all about it directly I get a chance."

Satisfied with this promise Val runs off and drags Ted with him to find Nannette and help feed the pigeons. Meanwhile Stuart breaks to his companions the news, and the plan that has come into his head.

That same evening, as Nannette and Ted are trying to coax Tatters to eat some nicely mashed potatoes and gravy, Stuart saunters up to them.

"Ted," he says, "isn't there a peculiar whistle with which you used to call the dogs?"

"Yes," answers Ted, "this is it,"—and he whistles—"Rags always obeyed it even if he was a great way off."

"Like this,"—and Stuart tries.

"No, not quite," says Ted. "Listen,"—and he whistles again. "Yes, that is better," as Stuart tries a second time, "but not quite perfect."

"I don't like being beaten," says Stuart with a careless laugh; "I shall try until I succeed. There, that is right now," and as he goes off practising it, he calls out, "My voice must be rather like yours, Ted; listen how well I have it," and he whistles a perfect imitation,—"Couldn't be known from Ted's, could it, Nannie?"

"No," answers Nannette, but both she and Ted rather

wonder at Stuart's taking so much trouble to learn that particular whistle.

Val, who is standing by, purses up his lips, and does not wonder at all. Then, for fear he should let out what he has been particularly told to keep to himself, he thinks it safest and wisest to follow Stuart before the temptation to tell gets too much for his weak mind.

"Oh, I suppose it's nothing," says Nannette half to herself.

"Oh, no, what should it be?" says Ted decidedly and unsuspectingly.

And they both dismiss the subject from their thoughts.



CHAPTER XII.

TED'S WHISTLE.

THE curtains of a tent at Marston are fluttering in the evening breeze. It is not one of the cricket-tents, those are visible in a field close by, but the tent in question is humbler, smaller, dingier, and with no scarlet flag hoisted on the top to wave to and fro at the pleasure of the wind. Humble however though it be, it is not to be despised, for within its canvas walls are to be shown to-night, "The world-famed Dogs as patronised by Her Majesty the Queen," and more especially the greatest marvel of the age,—

"THE WONDERFUL CLOWN DOG."

Outside, the excitement is great. The entrance to the tent is invaded by a large and increasing crowd of small children who will not be kept away even though a policeman big and tall is guarding the entrance. The policeman however is good-natured on the whole, and finds it

hard to resist the many entreaties for "just a peep." The "just a peep" reveals nothing but the heads of the people fortunate enough to have money sufficient to admit them within this charmed circle; and the small folk soon give up gazing wistfully at its outside walls, and with the happy content of children amuse themselves with dancing to the strains of music that reach their ears

Inside, the excitement is equally great, and nothing is talked of but the "Wonderful Clown Dog." The sixpenny seats are crammed. It is evident that the Manager or Managers of the affair did not expect many "Ouality," though he has done them the honour of "reserving" about a dozen chairs, which are placed unpleasantly close to the railing that separates the spectators from the saw-dust circle, the scene of the performance.

The "Quality" who occupy these chairs are six in number,-Stuart, Harry, Frank Rostrum, and Alan Grant in the front row, and behind them Iim, and a shrimp of a boy in white flannel-Val-still in his cricketing dress, and in high feather. He has created a sensation to-day, for he made more runs than any one on either side, though he was youngest there. This of course was in some measure owing to his luck in the bowler, but a great deal was due to himself and his agility,-this the lookers-on were not slow to acknowledge, and the applause that greeted him was immense.

However, even the remembrance of this, pleasant though it is, is fast being forgotten in the business of the evening.

The tuning-up begins. The band consists of a solitary fiddle, which is not badly managed by its owner. The Mabel Waltz is played through with some spirit, a few minutes' pause, the people are beginning to show signs of impatience, when a bell rings, and a man enters, followed by four dogs.

The eyes of the "Quality" which have been roving the tent are quickly occupied in scanning man and dogs. Val has jumped up, and is peering over Stuart's head. He bends and whispers a few words, which are repeated down the row, and the "Quality" apparently satisfied settle themselves down to wait for the performance.

The man is of medium height, with black hair and black whiskers, a fair, smooth, rosy skin, plump cheeks, and a mouth continually smiling. Two of the dogs are Italian greyhounds; one is a mongrel, a black, curly dog with white feet and a white chest; the other is partly bull, and partly fox-terrier, white with liver-coloured spots.

The dogs are put through many tricks, all of which they perform so cleverly that even the "Quality" get interested. The fiddle again strikes up, this time the old and well-worn "Not for Joe," and the dogs go out followed by some applause from the company.

The fiddle pauses; the bell rings; the gate that leads into the saw-dust circle opens again; the irrepressible figure in white flannel bounds up from his seat nearly over the heads of the quieter "Quality" in front of him. The master enters, followed this time by the four dogs and also by a boy bearing a tray on which are various articles.

"Val," whispers Stuart, "you must sit down. You are attracting attention. Don't get so excited."

"Besides," says Jim, "'tisn't respectable. Remember, my boy, you are 'Quality' to-night, and must behave according."

Thus admonished, Val sits down, but only to spring up again in a few minutes with another and higher bound.

"Oh, you India-Rubber Ball, do sit still," groans Jim. "It is most important now that you should act as if you had 'no feelins.'"

Val's last bound was excusable. In the midst of the tricks the four dogs are performing, two sharp, short barks are heard, the wicket-gate is jumped, and there appears upon the scene the long-expected

WONDERFUL CLOWN DOG.

A little pepper-and-salt coloured dog, with long, drooping, silky ears, and two bright brown, intelligent eyes,—this is what the people see as they press forward eagerly and begin to clap the hero of the evening. The applause

soon ceases, for the man is speaking. "Attention," he says, and the dog rivets his gaze upon him, and waits for further orders.

"Purty fellow," says a woman close by the reserved seats, "see how patient he waits, purty dear!"

The "Quality" say nothing. The four in front lean forward in breathless silence, the two at the back clutch tightly hold of the chairs before them.

The performance proceeds, and is watched by the audience with the deepest attention: you could hear a pin drop, so still is the interior of the tent, and even applause is reserved, so intent are all upon what is going on within the railed-off circle.

The tricks the dogs perform are many, and in all of them the Clown Dog imitates them and fails in some absurd manner, very cunningly and cleverly.

A chair is brought forward, and placed back-to-back with another chair; over this the four dogs leap one after another; the Clown Dog takes a run, hesitates, then another run, hesitates again, then takes the leap and falls back in the middle of it.

Then a hoop is brought out and held upright; the four dogs jump through it, and the Clown Dog jumps through it,—but backwards.

The four dogs walk round the circle upon their hind legs, two by two, each arm-in-arm; the Clown Dog tries to follow, but keeps tumbling down. At last he picks himself up, turns somerset after somerset, until

he comes up with the last couple, when he links himself to them, and walks upright as a pillar to the master's feet.

Next, five collars are placed upon the floor, and the dogs are told to put them on. The four dogs obey, but the Clown Dog puts his fore feet through his collar and lies down content. One of the greyhounds is sent to show him how to put it on; the Clown Dog makes a great effort and places it upon his head like a crown.

The dogs are then told to take off their collars. Now, the Clown Dog has slipped his over his head and round his neck in an instant, and is wriggling, backing, scratching, and growling in his efforts to get it off; several times it is partly off when a clumsy motion of his head tosses it back again. The four other dogs are waiting with their collars off and on the ground in front of them, when suddenly the Clown Dog slips his collar off and is scampering here and there with it in his mouth, soon pursued by master and dogs. The Clown Dog cleverly evades them, and at last is seen leaping over the wicket-gate with the collar in his mouth. Amid loud applause and many *encores*, the four dogs with their master follow more soberly, and thus ends

THE FIRST PART.

An interval of ten minutes, during which even the fiddle has rest. None of the people leave their seats,

and the heads of the "Quality" meet as they hold a whispered conference together. Then comes,

THE SECOND PART.

Only four of the dogs come in, the one left out being the mongrel. Two are dressed as ladies, two as gentlemen. The former in gay-coloured petticoats, the latter in, the one a buff, and the other a dark blue coat. The one in buff is the Clown Dog.

The figures of a quadrille are gone solemnly through, the Clown Dog stumbles, gives the wrong paw, takes his partner's place, and commits many blunders. Once, and once only, does he mistake his part, and then the whip descends upon him with a sharp cut.

The Clown Dog evidently knows his blunder as soon as it is committed, for he crouches meekly to receive the lash, then repeats the part where he blundered, this time without any mistake. There is a slight stir among the "Quality" as the whip descends, and the small figure in white flannel bounds up with such a very audible "beast," that the people around him say,

"Hush . . . sh . . . sh."

And Jim mutters, "Really, Val, if you are not quiet, I shall have to gag you and tie you to your chair."

The fiddle now strikes up the "Guards' Waltz," and the dogs prepare to take their partners. The people bend forward and strain their eyes not to lose a movement of what is going on. The Clown Dog is advancing towards one of the Italian greyhounds, a lady in a pink petticoat; when there breaks upon the hush of expectation, a whistle, loud, sharp, and clear.

The tent has been so still that the unusual sound startles every one, and each looks at his neighbour to see from whence it comes.

The effect of the whistle upon the Clown Dog is peculiar. He stops short, pricks up his ears, utters a cry of delight, and bounds towards the place from whence his ears tell him the sound comes. The fiddle ceases playing, and the other dogs remain in their places, quite undisturbed by the whistle which to them means nothing.

The owner of the dogs is not at a loss. With a quick step forward he intercepts the Clown Dog, and raising his whip with a menacing gesture and a few words spoken in a low tone, the dog crouches at his feet, trembling in every limb, and uttering a low whine as if to implore forgiveness.

But he has transgressed, and must be punished. The heavy whip is about to descend upon the trembling shoulders, when, clearing the barricade the "Quality" are within the circle surrounding the man; the whip is seized by several hands, and voices the Clown Dog knows well, though they are not the best-loved of voices, the voice of his own dear master, are saying, "Rags, Rags, dear old Rags! How pleased Ted will be to get you again."

Rags is upon his feet in an instant, the whip and his

acting alike forgotten. He springs upon the boys, he licks their hands, he cries, he barks, he scampers round them, he cannot be quiet a moment. With difficulty Val catches him to take off his finery, and when he is fairly quit of it Rags gives a caper high in the air as much as to say, "I am rid of *that* foolery for ever." Then he springs upon Val, and nearly overturns him by the vehemence of his caresses.

The man offers no resistance to the boys who surround him. He beckons with one hand and lowers his whip. The tall policeman saunters leisurely towards the place of action; the spectators are talking loud and fast, not knowing what to make of this strange scene.

"This is a very unusual proceeding, Mr. Policeman," says the man, speaking with a slightly foreign accent. "These young gentlemen"—a slight emphasis and pause—"take upon themselves to interrupt my performance. These may be *English* manners, but I am not accustomed to them."

Before any answer can be made, Stuart breaks in, speaking loud and clear.

"This person," pointing to the man, "stole this dog from my brother a few months ago. Not only that, but he fired a pistol, which caused the pony to rear and threw my brother off, and he has been ill for a long time in consequence."

There is a murmur among the spectators, just lately so still not to lose a word that was said. Up to now the

sympathy has evidently been upon the side of the owner of the dogs, the people thinking it a mere ungentlemanly "spree," and not at all liking the being deprived of their pennyworth. They are all pretty well acquainted with Ted's accident, for in searching for the missing dog it could not be kept a secret, and the strangeness of it caused it to be a good deal discussed. There is a sensation, and cries are heard not at all in the man's favour. He, however, remains unimpressed, and does not change countenance a bit. The policeman, very worthy and estimable, but not burdened with much common sense, looks first at the boys, then at the man; then at the man, then at the boys; himself a picture of helplessness.

"I am very sorry for your brother," says the man to Stuart politely, "but you must pardon me for saying that his accident has nothing to do with me. The dog you call Rags is my dog."

"Where did you get him?" interrupts Frank.

"I bought him of a friend of mine in Italy when he was only a month old. I have had all the trouble of rearing him and teaching him these accomplishments," answers the man. "If you young gentlemen will kindly wait until to-morrow, I am quite sure that I can satisfy you that this is *not* your dog. My Clown Dog may in some respects resemble the dog you have so unfortunately lost, and this resemblance has led you into an indiscretion of which I am sure you will all repent in calmer moments."

This sounds plausible, perhaps too much so, but the policeman evidently wavers. If the man had shown the slightest sign of confusion he would have felt himself justified in detaining him until the affair can be cleared up. But the man is quite cool, quite undisturbed, so the policeman, looking hopelessly at the boys, says feebly,

"Come, young gentlemen, don't you think you had better leave this to be settled to-morrow, and—"

"Let the thief get off safely with the dog in the meantime," shout the boys. "No, thank you."

"Look," says Stuart, turning round, "the dog knows us, he will come to our call, and he will shrink from that—that—person. It is strange a dog should not know his own master. Rags, come here, old boy! dear old Rags," and Rags answers by leaping upon Stuart and showering upon him welcoming and glad caresses.

Again public sympathy—including the policeman—is in favour of the boys. The dog certainly *ought* to know best who is his master.

The man is calm and pitying.

"Did your brother describe the thief—if he saw him—who stole his dog?" he asks Stuart in a resigned tone of voice.

"Yes," answers Stuart briefly.

"Did the description apply to me? was the thief like me?" asks the man carelessly, as one who knows the answer cannot fail to be in his favour. Before Stuart can reply, a squeaky voice, that seems to drop from the top of the tent, says,

"Yes, just like you-without your wig and whiskers."

There is an audible titter among the spectators, and some one calls out,

"Take them off and let us see."

The boys exchange glances of amusement. No one but themselves connects the voice that might have come from anywhere with that shrimp of a white-flannelled cricketer, seemingly so intent upon petting Rags.

The man does not look in the least disconcerted, and the good-natured policeman who has joined in the general titter is more helpless and uncertain than ever. At this crisis another policeman walks upon the scene, short, brisk, and alert.

"What is all this?" he asks. And the matter is explained to him.

"Now you gentlemen," he says decidedly, when he has heard the story, "this may be your dog and it may not. Anyhow I can't have this commotion about it; these are irregular proceedings. If you think you have sufficient grounds you can take out a warrant against the present owner of the dog, and bring the affair before a magistrate. But now you must clear off at once."

"That is very fair, Mr. Policeman," says the man.
"I for my part shall be ready any time to-morrow to go with these young gentlemen to answer the charge brought against me."

"And get away in the night and be nowhere to be found to-morrow," says Stuart indignantly.

"I'll keep my eye upon him," says policeman number

"Will you?" shout all the boys derisively, "you don't half know his dodges."

"Oh, no," says Stuart; "we are not going to trust to you."

"But you must," says policeman number two coldly, "and if you make a disturbance I shall take you in charge."

A hissing among the crowd now gathered in the tent until there is not even standing room. Cries of "Shame! Shame!"

The little white-flannelled cricketer stretches himself and yawns; then gives a bound like an India-rubber ball over the barricade and upon the chairs, followed by the delighted Rags, who thinks it is a game of chasing one another.

"Stop him," shouts the man, losing his control for the first time.

"Stop him," shouts policeman number two.

Policeman number one says nothing; but—I am sorry to write it of him—grins.

The crowd have no idea of stopping Val or Rags. There is no doubt now upon which side their sympathies are enlisted. They laugh, clap their hands, shout bravo, and open their ranks to let the boy and dog pass through.

Then, as they recognise the favourite little cricketer of the day, the clappings and the bravos are renewed with increased vigour.

Val's escapade has lasted but a minute, and has taken them all by surprise. Even the man has paid no attention to the quiet little shrimp of a boy who took no part in the proceedings beyond that of petting Rags.

"That was a splendid thought of Val's," says Jim, drawing a deep breath. "We shouldn't have succeeded without that happy thought."

"And neither of us could have done it but Val," says Frank.

"He is so small and light. See the way he went flying over those chairs."

And for the second time to-day Stuart feels quite proud of his younger brother.

"Now, young sir," says policeman number two, turning to Stuart, and speaking most decidedly, "as you seem the ringleader, I shall take you in charge."

"Very well," says Stuart, too much elated to care about anything.

"Then you must take us all in charge," shout the boys in one breath, "for we'll all stick together."

Before any reply can be made, the little wicket-gate through which the performers entered is opened, and there walks another person into the midst of the now astonished group—no less a person than Mr. Gray himself.

Policeman number two recognizes a magistrate and retires humbly.

"I was only doing my duty, sir," he says deprecatingly. Mr. Gray walks straight up to his eldest son.

"Stuart," he says, "I am surprised at a boy of your age not having better sense than to make such an exhibition of yourself. Go, all of you, and join Val, who is outside, and wait till I come to you."

Mr. Gray's words and manner are somewhat stern, but Stuart looks fearlessly into his Father's face, and reads there nothing that need alarm him very much. Of course Mr. Gray regrets that the boys should have taken the law into their inexperienced hands, and have, as he expressed it, "made an exhibition of themselves." But take into consideration the ingrained love of boys for anything in the shape of adventure or daring, and then this escapade of theirs looks rather more excusable.

The boys make their exit by the private way, followed by cheers from the crowd. Outside they find Val and Rags awaiting them. Here also is the mystery of Father's appearance upon the scene solved.

"I told Nannie," says Val, in an injured tone; "I told it her just before I started as a great secret."

"It is a good thing Mr. Gray came," says Alan, laughing, "or we should just now be walking off to prison."

However, instead of spending the night in prison, the

next train carries them back to Veramede, where they are all to have supper, and where Alan Grant is to sleep as was before arranged. And surely never a merrier party travelled by rail than the gentleman, six boys, and a dog, who stepped into one of the railway carriages from the Marston Station, upon the night of the 29th of September, 18—. A day often talked about and long remembered by the Marston folk, and chiefly memorable for two occurrences—

It was the first day of the Marston grand Cricket Match.

It was the last appearance in public of Monsieur Dolibre's Wonderful Clown Dog.

The good-natured policeman is not forgotten by the boys. As he details his evening's adventures to a round-eyed admiring wife, he lays upon the table a goodly pile of silver.

"Tips," he explains briefly, "from the young gents."

"And that comes, Willum," says his pleased wife, impressively, "of taking the part of the oppressed."

And "Willum" does not contradict her.

In writing a story one of the most difficult things is to know exactly when to leave off. There is a rule for writing letters given in a book—I do not quote the exact words, but the sense is the same—"Always write your letters so that the people who read them may wish

there were more." This rule is a good one to apply to stories as well as to letters. Therefore I leave it to my readers to imagine the delight of Ted at getting back Rags, the joy of Rags at seeing again his dear master, and the welcome he gave to, and received from—Tatters. Also the speedy change of the latter from shadow to substance, now that his companion is restored to him.

The irrepressible Val crops up again. The local newspapers are loud in praise of "Mr. Valentine Gray's unsurpassed runs," at the Marston Cricket Match. These and like compliments he receives with more modesty than might have been expected from him. He is prouder of his lawless feat of running off with Rags than he is even of his cricketing.

Simple Simon has been allowed to go free, as Father knew that Ted would not hear of his being detained. Ted is very sensitive at first as to Rags showing off his accomplishments; but as time goes on, and Rags is once more the high-spirited Rags of former days, forgetting altogether the cowed look and frightened gesture, remnants of the time when he appeared as "The Wonderful Clown Dog," Ted gets less particular, and it is even whispered that in some approaching Christmas charades at Veramede Rags will "put in an appearance." But this is a great secret and must not be told to any one, though, as Nannette knows it, I thought I might tell you.

Now—I really must bid you, my readers, good-bye. Otherwise you may be inclined to throw the book down with a disdainful—"Ah, it's a stupid story after all, and—nothing, but—



A LIST OF BOOKS

SUITABLE FOR

Presents, L'ending Libraries, and School Rewards,

COMPRISING

TALES AND STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE,
BIOGRAPHY, AND POETRY,

PUBLISHED BY

JOSEPH MASTERS & CO.,

78, NEW BOND STREET, LONDON.

A CATALOGUE.

THE JUVENILE ENGLISHMAN'S LIBRARY.

18mo. cloth.

- TALES OF THE VILLAGE CHILDREN. 1st Series. By the Rev. F. E. Paget. 2s.
- TALES OF THE VILLAGE CHILDREN. 2nd Series. By the Rev. F. E. Paget. 2s.
- THE HOPE OF THE KATZEKOPFS; or, the Sorrows of Selfishness. A Fairy Tale. By the Rev. F. E. Paget. 2s.
- THE CHARCOAL BURNERS; a Story of the Rise of a young Artist. From the German. 1s. 6d.
- GODFREY DAVENANT; a Tale for School Boys. By the Rev. W. E. Heygate. 2s.
- TALES OF CHRISTIAN HEROISM. By the late Rev. J. M. Neale. 2s.
- STORIES FROM HEATHEN MYTHOLOGY, AND GREEK HISTORY. By the late Rev. J. M. Neale. 2s.
- TALES OF CHRISTIAN ENDURANCE. By the late Rev. J. M. Neale. 28.
- THE MANGER OF THE HOLY NIGHT. A Sketch of the Christmas Festivities and their attendant circumstances, from the German. 2s.
- SCHOOL GEOGRAPHY, with a Chapter on the Ecclesiastical Geography of Great Britain. By the Rev. H. Hopwood. 2s.

JUVENILE ENGLISHMAN'S HISTORICAL LIBRARY.

Edited by the Rev. J. F. Russell, B.C.L.

ENGLISH HISTORY FOR CHILDREN. By the late Rev. J. M. Neale. 2s. Limp cloth, 1s. 4d.

HISTORY OF SCOTLAND. By the late Rev. W. B. Flower. 2s.

HISTORY OF IRELAND. Edited by the late Rev. T. K. Arnold. 2s.

HISTORY OF ROME. By the Rev. Samuel Fox. 2s.

HISTORY OF GREECE. By the late Rev. J. M. Neale. 2s.

HISTORY OF SPAIN. By the Rev. B. G. Johns. 2s. HISTORY OF PORTUGAL. By the late Rev. J. M. Neale. 2s.

School Editions in limp cloth, 1s. each.

The Rev. W. GRESLEY, M.A.

Fcap. 8vo., cloth gilt.

THE FOREST OF ARDEN. A Tale illustrative of the

English Reformation. 3s.; cheap edition, 2s.

The author has here diligently endeavoured to write on the Reformation without the spirit of partizanship, to describe things as they were.

THE SIEGE OF LICHFIELD. A Tale illustrative of the Great Rebellion. 3s.; cheap edition, 1s. 8d.

The narrative commences early in the year 1642, and carries us through the Great Rebellion, when England was convulsed with faction, showing the sufferings and miseries that attended it.

SOPHRON AND NEOLOGUS; or Common Sense Philosophy. 3s.

BERNARD LESLIE. The Revival of Church Principles in England. 3s.

BERNARD LESLIE. Second Part. The Progress of the Church Movement, 3s.

THE PORTRAIT OF AN ENGLISH CHURCHMAN. A

new and cheaper edition. 2s. 6d.

This is an attempt to paint the feelings, habits of thought, and mode of action which naturally flow from a sincere attachment to the system of belief and discipline of our Church.

HOLIDAY TALES. 16mo. 2s.; wrapper, 1s. 6d.
CONTENTS:—The Magical Watch, Mr. Bull and the Giant Atmodes, Old
Pedro, Adventures of a Bee.



The late Rev. EDWARD MONRO, M.A.

SACRED ALLEGORIES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DEATH. Limp cloth, 1s. each; cloth boards, 1s. 6d. each. In two vols, cloth, 3s, 6d, each,

THE DARK RIVER. An Allegory on Death.

THE VAST ARMY. An Allegory on Fighting the good Fight of Faith.

THE COMBATANTS. An Allegory showing how a Christian should contend with and overthrow his enemies.

THE REVELLERS. An Allegory on the Lord's Second Coming. THE MIDNIGHT SEA; or the Great Pilot our only Refuge in Storms. THE WANDERER; or Sheep without a Shepherd.

THE JOURNEY HOME. Intended to illustrate some of the

leading features of the Christian life.

THE DARK MOUNTAINS. A Sequel to the Journey Home.

A Fine Edition of the Allegories complete in one vol. Printed on toned paper and handsomely bound. Crown 8vo., cloth, 7s. 6d.; antique morocco, 16s.

WALTER THE SCHOOLMASTER; or, Studies of Cha-

racter in a Boys' School. 4th edition. Fcap. 8vo., cloth, 3s. "Brings out the religious aspect of the Schoolmaster's office in its bearing on the moral training of the Christian soul, to whom he is in some measure a Pastor."—Guardian.

BASIL THE SCHOOLBOY; or, the Heir of Arundel.

A Story of School Life. 5th edition. Small 8vo., cloth, 3s. 6d.
"Intended to paint the characters of boys in large modern Schools; the characters have had their types in most Schools, and are painted with a consistency that gives a life-like character to every scene."—Ecclesiastic.

TRUE STORIES OF COTTAGERS. 18mo. Cloth, or in a packet, 2s.

EUSTACE; or, the Lost Inheritance. A Tale of School Life. Fcap. 8vo. 2s.

"A remarkably interesting and religious story which in a very impressive manner conveys to both old and young many wise lessons showing most prominently the lasting happiness of those who strive faithfully to gain a heavenly inheritance."—Leeds Intelligencer.

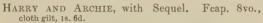
PASCAL THE PILGRIM. A Tale for Young Communicants. Fcap. 8vo. 1s.; cloth, 1s. 6d.

FOOTPRINTS IN THE SNOW. Fcap. 8vo. 1s.

HARRY AND ARCHIE; or, First and Last Communion, and the danger of delay. 1s. cloth.

NANNY. A Sequel to "Harry and Archie." cloth, 1s.





CLAUDIAN. A Tale of the Second Century. Fcap. 8vo. 2s.: limp cloth, 1s.

TALES FOR THE MILLION. Feap. 8vo., cloth gilt, 2s. MIDSUMMER EVE. 6d.: cloth. 1s.

Miss C. A. JONES.

Complete in 8 vols., handsomely bound in cloth, 2s. each. In an ornamental box, suitable for presentation, 20s.

STORIES FOR THE CHRISTIAN YEAR. A New Series of Stories for every Sunday and Holyday throughout the Year.

The Series is suitable for the Home or Parochial Library, and forms an attractive Gift Book for the Young.

The Work may also be had in twenty-two Parts, 6d. each.

"Very excellent and interesting. They are suited for children of all classes, and we can hardly imagine a fitter or more welcome prize book,"—Church Quarterly

"The Parts before us each contain four tales of twenty-four pages each, and are capital sixpennyworths, both as to quantity and quality. We can strongly recommend the work to those who have the care of children."—Chierch Times.

"They are simple, pleasing, and good, and we hope they will please our readers as much as they have pleased us."—Literary Churchman.
"These touching little Stories will prove both attractive and instructive to young people."—John Bull.

"The Stories are undeniably pretty."-Church Bells.

NOT QUITE A HEROINE. Fcap. 8vo., cloth, 3s.

"A nicely toned quiet story of girlish usefulness and influence. The thoughts and purposes are all excellent." "Guardian.
"The circle into which the story introduces the reader is composed really of ladies and gentlemen, and altogether we take it to be a success; quite a book to be bornein mind by those who have the charge of girls." "Literary Churchman." "Not quite a Heroine' is a delightful story." "John Bull." "A pretty story of love and patience. There are several characters very well drawn, and the events are well woven together. We have pleasure in being able to commend it." "Church Bells."

GERTRUDE DACRE. Fcap. 8vo., cloth, 2s.

STORIES OF THE WONDERFUL KINGDOM AND SOME OF ITS SOLDIERS AND SERVANTS. With forty-two Illustrations. Small 4to., cloth, 3s. 6d.

"This is a book we are very glad to see, as it will bring some of the noblest scenes in Church History within the ken of the very smallest children, just as Bible Stories are told to them. Thirty-eight stories in the simplest language of Saints and Martyrs of all ages must give the little readers some sense of the continuity and oneness of the Church. A child brought up on such stories as these would hardly fail to know at least what is meant in the Creed by the 'Holy Catholic Church."—Guardian.

The late Rev. J. M. NEALE, D.D.

THEODORA PHRANZA; or, the Fall of Constantinople.

"The subject—the last days of the Byzantine Empire, and its final downfall at the storming of Constantinople—is a lofty one, and it is worthly treated. The tale is full of thrilling interest both in its fictional and its historical aspects."—Scotzman.

STORIES OF THE CRUSADES. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

"Displays an extraordinary acquaintance with the manners and customs of the age, as well as great powers of description. Each page almost is a picture which seems to us to fairly represent both what was good and what was evil in the system which it illustrates."—Bcdestastic.

DUCHENIER; or, the Revolt of La Vendée. Fcap. 8vo. 3s.6d.

THE EGYPTIAN WANDERERS. A Tale of the Tenth

Persecution. 18mo. 2s.
"Mr. Neale's command of the facts of early Church History is well known, and his power of using his great knowledge in the composition of picturesque and striking Children's Books, most of our readers are well acquainted with. This book will be found by no means his least successful effort."—Guardian.

EVENINGS AT SACKVILLE COLLEGE WITH MY CHIL-

LENT LEGENDS. Stories for Children from Church History. 18mo. 2s.

THE FOLLOWERS OF THE LORD; Stories from Church History. 18mo. 2s.

SUNDAY AFTERNOONS AT AN ORPHANAGE, containing Twenty-three Short Discourses addressed to the Children of S. Margaret's Orphanage, East Grinsted, on the afternoons of Sundays and Holy Days. 18mo. 2s.

TALES ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE APOSTLES' CREED. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.

THE TRIUMPHS OF THE CROSS. Tales of Christian Heroism. 18mo. 2s.

THE TRIUMPHS OF THE CROSS. Part II. Tales of Christian Endurance. 18mo. 2s.

STORIES FROM HEATHEN MYTHOLOGY. 18mo. 2s.

THE FARM OF APTONGA. A Story of the Times of S. Cyprian. Second edition. 12mo., cloth, 2s.; wrapper, 1s. 6d.

HYMNS FOR CHILDREN. Three Series, in cloth, 1s.



MEDIÆVAL HYMNS, SEQUENCES, AND OTHER POEMS, translated by the Rev. J. M. Neale. Second edition. 2s.

SEATONIAN PRIZE POEMS. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

The Rev. F. E. PAGET, M.A., Rector of Elford.

HOMEWARD BOUND: the Voyage, and the Voyagers: the Pilot, and the Port. Second edition. Crown 8vo. 4s.

"It is a review of the cares, the duties, the troubles of life; the consolations that enable souls to bear, the principles upon which it behoves them to act; the hopes that brighten the darkest prospects of the traveller through the world. It is no unworthy gift to the Church from one who has served her so well by his pen in past time."—Literary Churchman.

A STUDENT PENITENT OF 1695. Crown 8vo. 4s. 6d.

"The whole book is a gem. But it is the latter part which charms us most. It is full of suggestiveness, and that of a very delicate and beautiful kind. For sick persons or for those who have much (or indeed anything) to do with the sick it will be most valuable,"—Literary Churchman.

THE OWLET OF OWLSTONE EDGE: his Travels, his Experience, and his Lucubrations. Fifth and cheaper edition. Fcap. 8vo., cloth, 2s. 6d.

THE CURATE OF CUMBERWORTH, and THE VICAR OF ROOST. Second edition. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.

S. ANTHOLIN'S; or, Old Churches and New. New edition. 18mo. 1s.; cloth, 1s. 6d.

TALES OF THE VILLAGE. A New edition. Three Parts in One Vol. Fcap. 8vo. 5s. 6d.

The Romanist—The Dissenter—The Infidel.

TALES OF THE VILLAGE CHILDREN. Sixth edition. 2 Vols. 18mo., cloth, 2s. each.

THE HOPE OF THE KATZEKOPFS; or, the Sorrows of Selfishness. Fifth edition. 18mo., cloth, 2s.

"We must not forget to recommend a book the moderate price of which leaves no nursery library excusable for its a sharming story and ought to be much more widely known than it is. We cannot recommend it too highly to those who have not already made friends with it."—Aunt Judy's Magazine.

THE WARDEN OF BERKINGHOLT. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.

"Enters fully into the responsibilities which rank, property, and education involve."—English Review.



TALES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

By STELLA AUSTIN.

OUR NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOUR. Small Svo., cloth,

3s. 6d. "A perfectly delightful little book which every child ought to be enabled to enjoy. It is thoroughly natural and childlike, and Miss Austin is to be congratulated on her success throughout."—Morning Post.

Illustrated by C. O. Murray. Small 8vo., cloth, 3s. 6d.

"A very delightful story. The boys and girls for whom it is intended will find 'Pat' a very welcome and attractive present."—John Bull.

BEN CRAMER: WORKING JEWELLER. Small Svo.,

cloth, 3s. 6d. "It is not often that a pleasanter or better written story for children can be met with than 'Ben Cramer: Working Jeweller.' The tone of the book is thoroughly wholesome, and it is, in fact, one which any child may read with profit, and which cannot possibly do harn to anybody."—The Scotsman.

UNCLE PHILIP. Second edition. Small Svo., cloth,

"Stella Austin writes for both boys and girls. Her 'Uncle Philip' is a very cheery tale, full of a healthy humour, and inculcating, without too directly pointing, a most excellent moral."—The Times.

FOR OLD SAKE'S SAKE. Second edition. Fcap. 8vo., cloth, 3s.

"Another pretty and natural story by the pleasant author of 'Rags and Tatters,' with no lack of incident, humour, delineation of character, or whatever else is essential to successful story-telling. Miss Austin has the mystery of her craft, and knows how to blend the touching and pathetic with the humorous and the graphic."—English Chuschman.

RAGS AND TATTERS. Third edition. Small 8vo..

"The book is full of life, and the characters of the children are delineated with vivid truthfulness,"—Guardian.
"Rags and Tatters' is a good book, and is written by a good writer, with feeling, and piety, and common sense, three excellent things which do not always accompany each other."—Morning Post.

STUMPS. Fifth edition. 16mo., cloth, 2s. 6d.

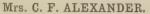
"A charming story—simple without being nonsensical, and with a thoroughly good and refined Church tone. A capital gift to the denizens of the nursery."

"Very cleverly and quaintly written."-Aunt Judy's Magazine.

SOMEBODY. Fourth edition. 16mo., cloth, 2s. 6d.

"It is a very long time since we met with so charming a child's story as 'Somebody.' To parents or persons who know and are fond of children it will be delightful."—Church Times.





THE BARON'S LITTLE DAUGHTER, and other Tales. Fifth edition, 18mo, 2s. 6d.

"The most delightful little volume that we have met with for a very long time,-the poetry even surpassing the prose in beauty."-Ecclesiastic.

THE LORD OF THE FOREST AND HIS VASSALS. Fourth Edition. 2s. 6d.

An allegory representing the real strife against Sin, the World, and the Devil, which all have to fight.

FIFTY EIGHTH EDITION.

- HYMNS FOR LITTLE CHILDREN. 18mo., wrapper. 6d.; cloth, 1s.; French morocco, 2s.
- Royal 32mo., wrapper, 3d.; cloth, 6d.
- Set to Music by Dr. Gauntlett. Fcap. 4to., wrapper, 2s. 6d.; cloth, gilt edges, 4s.
- Set to Music by E. C. A. Chepmell. Parts I. and II., 1s. each.
- A new edition handsomely printed on thick toned paper, with red border lines, 16mo., cloth, 2s.6d. With Twelve Photographs, cloth, gilt edges, 5s.; mor. 10s.
- HYMNS, DESCRIPTIVE AND DEVOTIONAL, for the use of Schools. Royal 32mo. 2d.
- MORAL SONGS, with Thirty-nine Vignette Illustrations. 18mo., wrapper, 8d.; cloth, 1s.; French morocco, 2s.
- Royal 32mo., wrapper, 3d.
- ILLUSTRATED. With Eighty-five engravings on wood, from original drawings by eminent artists. Small 4to., cloth, gilt edges, 6s.

"Amongst the numerous editions of poems which have been published as a kind of pretext for grouping together the choicest efforts of the wood-engraver's art, it may be safely affirmed that few, if any, have excelled this of Mrs. Alexander's. The landscape and marine sketches by Wimperis, Boot, Leitch, and Skelton are lovely. Altogether it is hardly possible to conceive a more beautiful present."—Church Times.
"A volume of real beauty and exquisite taste."—Literary Churchman.

NARRATIVE HYMNS FOR VILLAGE SCHOOLS. 3d.

 Set to Music for one or two voices, by A. F. Fcap. 4to., wrapper, 2s. 6d.

POEMS ON SUBJECTS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. Parts I. and II., each 6d., wrapper. In one vol., cloth, 1s. 6d.

Miss FLORENCE WILFORD.

A VANTAGE GROUND, and other Tales. Crown 8vo., cloth, 4s. 6d.

"There is a great grace and sweetness, and some humour of a quiet and playful sort in this book, and the deep undercurrent of the highest Church doctrine is always felt, though never obtrustive,"—The Guardian.

A MAIDEN OF OUR OWN DAY. 2nd Edition. Crown

"An eminently bright, delicate, and tender story—one pleasant to read. and pleasant to think over."—Scottish Guardian.

LITTLE LIVES AND A GREAT LOVE. Dedicated to the Children of the Society of the Love of JESUS. 2nd Edition. 16mo., 2s. 6d.

"Any one who wishes to see the highest Church Doctrine put before children in the most wise and right principled way had better read 'Little Lives and a Great Love,' which contains several noble stories in all of which the 'Great Love' is the constraining spirit and the one thought."—Literary Churchman.

THE MASTER OF CHURCHILL ABBOTS, AND HIS LITTLE FRIENDS. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

THE KING OF A DAY; or, Glimpses of French Life in the Fifteenth Century. 18mo., cloth, 2s.

"An historic legend of the turbulent times that preceded the advent of Joan of Arc. The authoress has written a pretty story in a very pleasant way. The volume will well repay perusal."—Literary Churchmach.

JOY IN DUTY. 18mo. 6d.

AN AUTHOR'S CHILDREN. 18mo., cloth, 1s.

"A very pretty little story. We cannot praise it higher than by saying that it is not unworthy of the Author of 'A Maiden of our own Day." "-Guardian.

TALES FOR CHORISTERS.

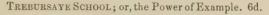
IN THE CHOIR AND OUT OF THE CHOIR. 18mo.,

"It is one of the best, if not absolutely the best story for a Choristers' or a Notional School Library we have seen. We strongly urge all our friends to buy it."—Literary Churchman.

STORIES FOR CHORISTERS. 18mo. 2s.

THE ISLAND CHOIR; or, the Children of the Child JESUS. Third edition. 4d.

THE TWO SURPLICES. By Ada Cambridge. 4d.



THE CHORISTER'S FALL. By the Author of "Trebursave School." 4d.

THE CHORISTERS OF S. MARY'S. A Legend, A.D. 1143. 4d.

LITTLE WALTER, THE LAME CHORISTER.

THE SINGERS. By the Rev. F. E. Paget. 4d.

By the Author of "The Chorister Brothers." AULD FERNIES' SON. Crown 8vo., cloth, 6s.

THE CHORISTER BROTHERS. Fourth edition. Fcap. 8vo., 3s.

"This is a thoroughly good book, and deserves a largely extended circle of readers. We give it our very high commendation,"—Church Times.
"The story is told with liveliness and simplicity, and we follow it with interest to the end. The manner is much more than the matter in this sort of books, and in this instance the manner is very good."—Guardian.

THE INCUMBENT OF AXHILL. A Sequel to "The Chorister Brothers." Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

"The tale is sensibly written, and free from follies or extravagances."-Guardian.

"Though a sequel to 'The Chorister Brothers,' it is complete and intelligible as it stands. It is a clever and interesting story, and is likely to be a favourite."—Church Times.

THE CHILDREN OF THE CHAPEL. A Tale of the Times of Queen Elizabeth. Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 2s.

"A charmingly told tale. The author has the rare art of not only enlisting but retaining the sympathy of his readers,"—Public Opinion.
"The Children of the Chapel is an old favourite. We hope the present

generation of readers will appreciate it as highly as it deserves, and as earlier readers undoubtedly did."—Literary Churchman.

MARK DENNIS; or, the Engine-Driver. A Tale of the Railway. Second edition. 18mo., 2s.

A MARTYR BISHOP, AND OTHER VERSES. Fcap. 8vo., cloth, 3s.

"Contains some of the best sacred poetry we have read for some time. The poems are happy in conception, felicitously expressed, and admirable in tone.

"One of the best volumes of sacred poetry which have issued from the press for some time. It is particularly worthy of notice that the high level is maintained throughout."—Fohn Bull.

By Mrs. MITCHELL.

THE LITTLE BLUE LADY, and other Tales. Illustrated by C. O. MURRAY. Small 8vo., cloth, 4s. 6d.

"These stories are all interesting in their various ways, and are told well,"

"All the stories are well written. There will be no hesitation on the part of any one who reads the book in admitting that it is highly interesting, and is possessed of much dramatic force."—Socioman.
"A charming collection. The volume is full of good things."—Morning

THE BEAUTIFUL FACE. A Tale for Young and Old. With Illustrations. Small 8vo., cloth, 4s. 6d.

"Mrs. Mitchell has shown great dexterity in a very difficult work in her story of 'The Beautiful Face.' This is not precisely what would be called 'a Sunday book,' yet there is in it a strong infusion of religious teaching. This infusion, however, is never too perceptible; it flavours, but it does not dominate Mrs. Mitchell's story. It is a good bit of work of its particular class."—The Times.

HATHERLEIGH CROSS. 18mo., cloth, 1s.

ABBEY LANDS. A Tale. By W. S. Rockstro. Fcap. 8vo. 5s.

"We must here take leave of the author, greatly commending the high tone of principle and the devoted fervour with which his work is filled throughout.

The book is interesting, gracefully written, and rich in true and noble thoughts."-Ecclesiastic.

THE APPLE BLOSSOM; or, a Mother's Legacy. By Onyx Titian. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

ALICE BERESFORD; a Tale of Home Life. Author of "Tales of Kirkbeck," &c. Third edition. Fcap. 8vo., cloth, 3s. 6d.

"Here we recognise the author of the excellent 'Tales of Kirkbeck' in the devotional feeling evident in every page, and in the deep realization of that spiritual life in the world and out of it."—*Ecclesiastic*.

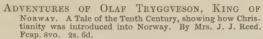
ARCHIE'S AMBITION. A Tale. 18mo., cloth, 1s.

"A most exquisite story; and though of extreme pathos yet without unreality or affectation. It has the warmest recommendation we can possibly give."—Literary Churchman.

AVICE; or, a Page from the History of Imperial Rome. By E. F. Pollard. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

"A charming little story of early Christian faith and struggles under Caliguia and Nero. The author has taken much pains with the work, and the result is the production of a most interesting book. In it will be found a delicious freshness that would make the reputation of a bigger book."—Public Opinion.





"The authoress has happily combined amusement and instruction. It is no librarise that Mrs. Reed has given us the information so pleasantly that very few will close her book through wearisomeness."—Fohn Bull.

BEN'S ANGEL. By the Author of "Neddie's Care," &c. 16mo. 6d.

THE BIRTHDAY. A Tale. By the Author of "Gideon," "Josiah," &c. Fifth edition. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d. This valuable present book, by a late Noble Lady, contains the account of the daily life of three or four young people, their failings and virtues.

THE BISHOP'S LITTLE DAUGHTER. A Tale for the Young. Fifth edition. 18mo. 2s.

BEATRICE: a Tale of the Early Christians. By A. Bonus, 18mo, 1s. 6d.

Baptismal Vows: or the Feast of S. Barnabas. 18mo. 1s.

BOOK OF CHURCH HISTORY, founded on the Rev. W. Palmer's "Ecclesiastical History," 5th edit. 18mo, 1s.

BETHANY, a Pilgrimage; and MAGDALA, a Day by the Sea of Galilee. By the Rev. S. C. Malan, Vicar of Broadwindsor, Dorset. Second edition. Fcap. 8vo. 1s. 6d.

"A graphic account of what Mr. Malan saw and felt. It will be of service to a large class of readers."—Clerical Journal.

THE CHILDREN OF ROSE LYNN. By Selina Hancock.

"This is a capital collection of stories for reading in the nursery and schoolroom. Interesting and instructive at the same time, they cannot be too strongly recommended."— John Bull.

CHAPTERS ON ANIMALS; or, Annie Grant's Playmates. 32mo., cloth, 1s.

CHAPTERS ON PLANTS; or, Marion's Herbal. 32mo. cloth, 1s.

CHAPTERS ON THE TE DEUM. By the author of "Earth's Many Voices." 16mo., cloth, 2s. A 3



CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR CHILDREN. From the German. 18mo. 1s.

Gives a lively account of how Christmas-tide was spent by rich and poor, in the village of Weld; and the lesson is taught that riches, if spent entirely on ourselves, will surely bring disappointment and evexation.

CHRONICLES OF S. MARY'S; or, Tales of a Sisterhood, By S. D. N. Second edition. Crown 8vo., cloth, 6s.

"The book before us is not merely new, but it could not have been even invented as a fancy sketch by the most imaginative writer a very few years ago. And that because it deals with the now familiar work of Sisterhoods, and gives some glimpses into the inner ways of an English Convent. We have to thank the author for some pleasant hours of reading, and most of those who follow our example will gain besides much information which we had gathered before in a more direct manner."—Church Times.

CRESSINGHAM; or, the Missionary. By Charlotte Priscilla Adams. Fcap. 8vo. 1s.

CONVERSATIONS WITH COUSIN RACHEL. 4 Parts, in 1 vol. cloth, 2s. 6d.

COTTAGE HOMES; or, Tales on the Ten Commandments. By H. Yorke. With engravings. 18mo., cloth, 2s.

CHARITY AT HOME. By the Author of "Working and Waiting." 18mo. 2s.

"A pleasant and very profitable tale, showing how one member of a family, and that a girl, may ward off poverty and suffering from the rest by persevering exertions and unselfish principles."—Guardian

A CHRONICLE OF DAY BY DAY. By Miss E.S. B. Sydney. Fcap. 8vo. 5s.

THE CHURCH CATECHISM. With the Confirmation Service. Beautifully illustrated by John Gilbert. Cheap edition, 6d.; on tinted paper in cloth gilt edges, 1s.

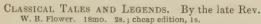
THE CHURCHMAN'S COMPANION. A Monthly Magazine. 6d.

First Series in 40 vols. cloth, published at 3s. 6d. each, reduced to 2s. each. Some of these volumes being out of print complete sets cannot now be supplied.

Second Series, 6 vols. cloth, reduced to 2s. 6d. each. Third Series, enlarged, 22 vols., 8vo., cloth, 4s. each. Fourth Series, commenced January, 1881.

THE COASTS OF TYRE AND SIDON, a Narrative. By the Rev. S. C. Malan. Fcap. svo. 1s.

"No one can follow Mr. Malan in his reverent and truthful description of these holy places, without feeling that the scenes have a life and reality imparted to them that in our minds they did not possess before."—Churchman's Companion.



These Tales are free translations from parts of Ovid and other authors, and adapted to the minds of children,

- CONVERSATIONS ON THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND, for the use of Children. By C. A. B. Edited by the Rev. J. Baines. 18mo., 2s. 6d.
- THE CHILD'S NEW LESSON BOOK, or Stories for Little Readers. 16mo. 1s.; cloth, 1s. 6d.
- DEEPDENE MINSTER; or, Shadows and Sunshine. By Cecilia Mac Gregor. Fcap. 8vo. 1s. 6d.
- A DROP IN THE OCEAN; or, short Legends and Fairy Tales. By Agnes and Bessie. 1s.
- EASY READINGS FROM THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

 For the use of Little Children. By Mary E. C. Mooré. Edited
 by the Rev. M. W. Mayow, M.A. Second edition. 18mo. 2s.
- ELLEN MERTON; or, the Pic-nic. By Mrs. Stone, author of "Gon's Acre," "The Art of Needlework," &c. 18mo. 4s. 6d.
- ESTHER MERLE, and other Tales. By Mrs. Francis Vidal, author of "Tales for the Bush," &c. 18mo. 1s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—John Salter; or, the Inconsiderate Marriage.—Three Neighbours; or, the Envying of others, &c.

- EVENING MEETINGS; or, the Pastor among the Boys of his Flock. By C. M. S. Fcap. 8vo. 2s.
- FANNY'S FLOWERS; or, Fun for the Nursery. With several engravings. 1s.; cloth gilt, 1s. 6d.
- THE FALL OF CRŒSUS: a Story from Herodotus. By the late Rev. W. Adams, author of "The Shadow of the Cross," "The Old Man's Home," &c. New edition. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.

"One of the most strikingly told stories culled from the annals of antiquity." -- Christian Remembrancer.

- FIRST TRUTHS FOR THE LITTLE ONES. By Ellen Lipscomb. 18mo., cloth, 1s. 6d.
- FREDERICK GORDON, or the Storming of the Redan. By a Soldier's Daughter. Royal 18mo. 1s.

A Tale of courage and perseverance of a young officer in the Crimean War, with an account of the founding of the Military Hospital at Netley near Southampton.



- FONTNELL S. CHAD. A Reminiscence. Crown Svo., cloth, 2s. 6d.
- FLOWERS AND FRUIT. For Little Children. 32mo. cloth, 1s.
- GENTLE INFLUENCE; or, The Cousin's Visit. By Miss F. M. Levett. Second edition. 18mo. 1s.
- THE GIANT-SLAYERS. By the Author of "Clevedon Chimes," &c. 18mo., cloth, 2s.
- GOING HOME. A Story. By F. G. W. Second edition. 18mo., cloth, 1s. 6d.
- GRACE ALFORD; or the Way of Unselfishness. By C. M. Smith. 18mo. 1s. 6d.
- HARRY'S HELP. By Mrs. S. C. Rochat. Square 16mo. 1s.
- HENRIETTA'S WISH. A Tale. By the Author of "The Heir of Redclyffe." Fifth edition. Fcap. 8vo. 5s.
- "We have seldom seen a book for the young less exaggerated, or more true to nature. The gulf between good and bad is generally so wide that no child can ever aspire to being so saintlike as the one, or dread being so criminal as the other. 'Henrietta's Wish' is clear of these extremes."—Morning Chronice. "The characters, dialogue, the tenderness and beauty of many of the scene are remarkable; the reality and vigour of the conversations are delightful."—Christian Remembrancer.
- HIGHER CLAIMS; or, Catherine Lewis the Sunday School Teacher. Edited by the Rev. R. Seymour. 18mo. 1s.; cloth, 1s. 6d.

Sets forth the great advantage that would accrue to the Church if the young persons of the middle classes were aroused to consider the full extent of her claims upon them, as well as on their superiors in wealth or station.

- HILARY S. MAGNA; or, The Nearest Duty First. A Tale. Fcap. 8vo. 4s.
- HOLIDAY HOURS. By the Author of "The Little Comforters." 32mo., cloth, 1s.
- HOLIDAYS AT S. MARY'S; or, Tales in a Sisterhood. By the Author of "Chronicles of S. Mary's." Second edition. 16mo. cloth, 2s. 6d.
- "The stories are all good and worthy of their author. The last is so clever, so original and bears a moral so valuable and yet so seldom enforced that we are specially anxious it should not escape observation."—*Literary Churchman.*.
 "A delightful volume. The last story is almost worthy of Tieck."—*Union Review.*

"There is pith in 'Holidays at S. Mary's.' The stories are both admirable and effective."—Guardian.

THE HOLY CHURCH THROUGHOUT ALL THE WORLD. By the Rev. S. Fox. 18mo. 2s.; cheap edition, 1s.

Being an account of the Church from the time of the Apostles to the present day, simply told for the use of young people.

THE HOME AT HEATHERBRAE. By the Author of "Everley." Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

HOME FOR CHRISTMAS. 18mo., cloth, 1s. 6d.

"A Tale of American Life full of pleasant writing and good teaching. The story carries you on with unflagging interest."—English Churchman.

HOME TRIALS; a Tale for the Middle Classes. By Mrs. Vidal. 18mo. 2s.

"By no means unworthy of Mrs. Vidal's pen, Mrs. Vidal writes when she has something to say, and therefore for the most part says it well."—Guardian.

HUBERT NEVILLE, A Tale. By the Author of some of the "Church Stories;" "Stories on the Festivals," &c. Fcap. 8vo. 1s.

ION LESTER. A Tale of True Friendship. By C.H.H. Fcap. 8vo. 4s. 6d.

A Tale of one who, born to riches and with every inducement to make this world his chief concern, yet devotes himself nobly to the good of his friends and people, and passes unburt through all the flattery and luxury consequent on his position.

IVO AND VERENA; or, the Snowdrop. By the Author of "Cousin Rachel." Eighth edition. 18mo., cloth, 2s.
A Tale of the conversion, life, and influence of an early convert to the Christian Faith, in the countries of the North.

Ivon. By the Author of "Aunt Agnes," and "Is he Clever?" Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

LESSONS FOR LITTLE CHILDREN FROM THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH. By C. A. R. 1s.

"We have great pleasure in commending two little sets of 'Lessons for Little Children,' by C. A. R. They are both written with much judgment."—Church Times.

A LIFE'S SEARCH. By E. S. B. Sydney. Fcap. 8vo., cloth, 2s. 6d.

"It often happens to us to be asked to name some good popular book setting forth the dangers of tampering with religious doubt. It very seldom happens that we can hit upon the exact thing that is wanted, and we are therefore the more rejoiced at meeting with a really powerfully written book like 'A Life's Search."—Literary Churchman.

LITTLE ALICE AND HER SISTER. Edited by the Rev. W. Gresley. 16mo. 2s.

The account of a little Girl who learned to deny herself, and think of others before herself.

THE LITTLE COMFORTER'S, and other Tales. 32mo., cloth, 1s.

LITTLE MABEL. A True Story. By the Author of "The Birthday Wreath." 18mo., 6d.; cloth, 9d.

LOVING SERVICE; or, a Sister's Influence. By Eliza A. Bayliss. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.

LOCAL LEGENDS. By the Author of "Cecil Dean," &c. 16mo., cloth, 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—The Legend of the Founder's Dreams.—A Legend of S. Osmund's Priory.—The Barons' Tryst. A Legend of the "Roses."—The Last Cantilupe. A Legend of Queenhope Manor.—Furzy Fallow; or, the Legend of Old Court.—Irene. A Legend of Sunshine.—Miss Mildred's Picnic; or, the Legend of the Lake.

THE LOYAL HEART, and other Tales for Boys.

Translated from the German. By Frances M. Wilbraham.

With Engravings. Second edition. 18mo. 2s. 6d. cloth; in a nacket. 2s.

packet, 2s.
The Loyal Heart—The Golden Locket—The Blind Boy; or, Trust in Providence—The Young Robinson Crusoe—"Thou shalt not Steal"—A Tale of

S. Domingo.

LUCY AND CHRISTIAN WAINWRIGHT, and other Tales. By the Author of "Aggesden Vicarage," "The Wynnes," &c. Fcap. 8vo., cloth, 3s. 6d.

THE MAIDEN AUNT'S TALES. By S. M., author of "The Use of Sunshine," "Nina," &c. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

"The moral of the whole is the happy influence of such a frame of mind, sanctified by religion, on the less perfect characters with which it is brought into contact."—Fohn Bull.

MARY AND MILDRED. A Tale for Girls. Edited by the Rev. Stair Douglas. Second edition, 18mo., cloth, 2s.

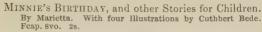
Showing in the life and friendship of two girls the error of acting on impulse without the aid of strict Christian principle.

THE MEETING IN THE WILDERNESS. An Imagination, wherein Divine Love is set forth. By the Author of "The Divine Master." 1s.

MEMOIRS OF AN ARM-CHAIR. Written by himself. Edited by the Author of "Margaret Stourton," "The Missing Sovereign," &c. Square 16mo. 1s.

MERCY DOWNER; or, Church and Chapel. 12mo., wrapper, 6d.; cloth, 1s.

"We can recommend this as the very best story book for a parish or servant's hall library that we have met with."—Literary Churchman.
"A grotesquely real sketch of Dissent and its frequent causes."—Monthly Packet.



MIDSUMMER HOLIDAYS AT PRINCES GREEN. Mrs. Eccles. author of "The Riches of Poverty." 18mo. 1s. A Tale on the duties of young children to their aged relatives.

MY BIRTHDAY EVE. A Waking Dream. With ornamental borders. 1s. 6d.

MY LITTLE PATIENT. A Tale of Hospital Life. Second Edition. 18mo., 6d.; cloth, 1s.

NEDDIE'S CARE; or, "Suffer the Little Children." With eight Illustrations. 16mo., cloth, 1s.

THE NOBLE ARMY OF MARTYRS. By the Rev. S. Fox. 18mo., cloth, 2s.; paper cover, 1s.

Containing short Lives of S. Stephen; S. James; S. Barnabas; S. Timothy; S. Polycarp; S. Ignatius; S. Clement; S. Irenæus; S. Dionysius; S. Justin Martyr. Suited for a class-reading book.
"Just the book for circulation among children or a Parochial Lending Library: what we want in the Upper Classes of our National Schools."—English

Review.

NORTHWODE PRIORY. A Tale, in Two Vols. By the Author of "Everley." Fcap. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

A NOBLE AIM. By Annie Thomas (Mrs. Pender Cudlip.) Published for the Benefit of the Devon House of Mercy. Fcap. 8vo., 1s.

"Extremely well told, by a writer at once graceful and refined."-Union

THE OLD COURT HOUSE. A Tale. 18mo. 1s.

ONE STORY BY TWO AUTHORS; or, a Tale without a Moral. By J. I., author of "A Rhyming Chronicle," and F. M. L., author of "Gentle Influence," &c. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

"Has the great merit of being original in the ideas it contains and the manner in which it is treated."—Clerical Journal.

OSWALD; a Tale of the Early Church. An Account of the Founding of Latin Christianity in our Island by S. Augustine, A.D. 596. By the Rev. C. W. H. Kenrick, B.A., Brasenose College, Oxford, and Curate of S. John Evangelist, Newbury. 18mo. 1s. 6d.

PARISH TALES. Reprinted from the "Tales of a

London Parish." In a packet, 1s. 6d. Contents:—Denis the Beggar Boy; The Old Street Sweeper; Honor O'Keefe; There's a Skeleton in every House; Christian Flower's Story; My Catechumens; The Hillside Cottage.



- Pearls Re-strung. Stories from the Apocrypha. By Mrs. H. S. Mackarness, author of "A Trap to Catch a Sunbeam," &c. 16mo., cloth, 2s. 6d.
- THE PRISONERS OF CRAIGMACAIRE. A Story of the "'46," Edited by the Author of "The Divine Master."
- "A tale of the rugged northern shores, and record of the patient suffering and heroic faith that was once displayed in the lives of men obscure and unknown or aerth, but whose names were doubtless written in heaven."—Preface.
- THE QUEEN'S ISLE. Chapters on the Isle of Wight, wherein Scripture truths are blended with Island beauties. By Rosa Raine. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- RAINY MORNINGS WITH AUNT MABEL. cloth, 2s. 6d.

An endeavour to inculcate in familiar and easy conversations a knowledge of the early Christian Church, its struggles and triumphs, including the Catacombs, and early missions.

- Rosa's Summer Wanderings. By Rosa Raine. Fcap. 8vo. 5s.
- ROBERT AND ELLEN. 18mo., cloth, 1s.

"A tale told with more than average power. It is much beyond the common range of stories for parish libraries."—Guardian.

- THE ROOT OF THE MATTER; or the Village Class. 1s.; cloth, 1s. 6d.
- RUTH LEVISON; or Working and Waiting. 1s.; cloth, 1s. 6d.
- SAVONAROLA, SCENES IN THE LIFE OF. By C. M. P. 18mo., cloth, 2s, 6d,
- Scenes of Suburban Life. By Anna B. F. Leigh Spencer, author of "The Co-Heiress of Willingham." &c. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.

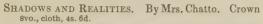
"An entertaining and forcible sketch of mission work in a neglected London district. The tale itself is full of interest, displaying the writer's happy power of description and delineation of character."—Union Review.

SERMON STORIES FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND HOME READINGS. By the Rev. H. Housman, author of "Readings on the Psalms." Second Edition, with two new Tales. 16mo., cloth. 2s.

"Having read the Easter Day Sermon story to a large congregation of

children, we can speak from experience of the interest excited by this touching allegory, which appears to be the gem of the book."—Church Belts.
"Will be found very helpful in children's services, readings at school, and even in some of those Cottage Lectures which require to have some life and interest in them."—The Gaardian.





SISTERS OF CHARITY, and some Visits with them. Being Letters to a Friend in England. Two Engravings. 1s.

SNOW-BOUND IN CLEEBERRIE GRANGE. A Christmas Story. By G. E. Roberts. Dedicated to John Ruskin, Esq. 2s. 6d.

"An attractive volume for the young, and not devoid of instruction either."
—Christian Remembrancer.

SOMERFORD PRIORY. By Cecilia Mac Gregor. Crown 8vo. 2s.

STORY OF A DREAM; a Mother's Version of the olden Tale of "Little Red Riding Hood," wherein that tale is made to bear a Christian lesson. 18mo. 1s.

STORIES FOR CHORISTERS. 18mo., cloth, 2s.

"One of the most suitable books we know for a prize or present to a choir boy. One and all are thoroughly good and elevating; and boys will be sure to like them."—*Literary Churchman*.

STORIES OF GENESIS FOR THE LITTLE ONES. By Mary Caunter. 18mo., 1s. 6d.

STORIES FOR BOYS. Four Series. 18mo., cloth, 2s. each.

STORIES FOR GIRLS. Four Series. 18mo., cloth, 2s. each.

STORIES ON THE COMMANDMENTS. The First Table: "My Duty towards God." By the Rev. H. Hill. 18mo., cloth, 1s.

STORIES ON THE COMMANDMENTS. The Second Table:
"My Duty towards My Neighbour." By W. S. Rockstro.
18mo., cloth, 1s. 6d.
The Two Parts in 1 vol. cloth, 2s.

STORIES AND LESSONS ON THE FESTIVALS, FASTS, AND SAINTS' DAYS. 32 books in a packet, 2s. In 3 vols., cloth, 3s.

STORIES OF CHRISTIAN JOY AND SORROW, or Home Tales. By the Rev. H. D. Pearson. 12mo., cloth, 2s.

STORIES ON THE BEATITUDES. By the Rev. G. F. Pearson. 18mo., cloth, 1s.

STORIES FOR YOUNG SERVANTS. By Anna Butler. 2nd edit., with an additional Story. With engravings. 2s. 6d.

SUMMERLEIGH MANOR; or, Brothers and Sisters. A Tale. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.

SUNDAY WALKS AND TALKS; or, Conversations on the Church Services. By the Author of "The Root of the Matter; or, the Village Class." 18mo., cloth, 1s. 6d.

SYLVESTER ENDERBY, THE POET. By Louis Sand, author of "The Voices of Christmas." Fcap, 8vo. 1s.

"The story is full of interest itself, well and pleasantly told, but its value lies in the lessons it so forcibly teaches,—lessons of warning on the one hand against the cares and riches of this world, and against that philosophical scepticism which so invariably creates an evil heart of unbelief."—Church Review.

SCHOLAR'S NOSEGAY. A series of Tales and Conversations on Flowers. 32mo., cloth, 1s.

SCRIPTURE READING LESSONS FOR LITTLE CHIL-DREN. By a Lady. With a Preface by the late Bishop Wilberforce. 16mo., cloth, 2s. 6d.

TABBY'S WHITE HYACINTH; or, Easter Offerings. By the Author of "Neddie's Care," &c. 16mo., cloth, 2s.

Tales of the Empire; or, Scenes from the History of the House of Hapsburg. By the Rev. J. Baines, author of the "Life of Archbishop Laud," &c. 18mo. 1s.6d.; paper, 1s.

"Mr. Baines has selected several of the best known and most interesting events, and made them the groundwork for a set of short stories. The idea is a happy one, and has been well carried out. Mary and Maximilian, Charles V., Wallenstein, Maria Theresa, and Radetzky, can hardly fail to make a story-book attractive."—Guardian.

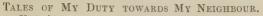
TALES FOR THE BUSH. By Mrs. F. Vidal. Fifth edition. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

TALES OF A LONDON PARISH, &c. By the Author of "Tales of Kirkbeck." Second edition, 18mo., 2s. 6d.

"Reveals by the help of a skilful and powerful hand, directed by deep religious earnestness, much of the sin, sorrow, the mental, moral, and spiritual darkness which London hides from the world's gaze. A book to be read and thought about."—West of England Conservative.

TALES OF CROWBRIDGE WORKHOUSE. By M. A. B. With a Preface by Louisa Twining. 12mo., cloth, 2s.

"Great freshness and individuality distinguish these sketches. For those who like to study character there are many genuine 'bits' true to nature, and wrought up as minutely as a Dutch cabinet picture. Ladies and gentlemen who do not wish always to read of life as a romance, and who are earnest enough in thought and in aim to wish to know the hard realities of life, may perhaps find in this book means of usefulness for which they will be thankful."—Court 'Fournal.



"Fourteen good stories for little children which cannot fail to be appreciated by those for whom they are intended."—Union Review.

TALES FOR ME TO READ TO MYSELF. With Twelve Engravings drawn by Macquoid. 3rd Edition. 16mo. 2s. 6d.

"These stories are intended to be put into the hands of little children, who, "These stories are intended to be put into the hands of intre enuiren, who, though only able to master very easy words, may yet be wishing to read to themselves. They were written to supply the want which is sometimes felt, of a book sufficiently easy for this purpose, and yet more entertaining than the short sentences in spelling books."—Preface.
"Is an excellent book, which will be found very acceptable to those for whose benefit it was published. It is simple, and attractive at the same time."—

"A delightful little children's story-book."—Church Review.

TALES OF THE ANCIENT BRITISH CHURCH. and cheaper edition, with an additional Tale. By the late Ven. Archdeacon Evans, author of "The Rectory of Valehead," &c. 18mo. 2s.6d.

"We heartily welcome this new edition of these Tales, at less than half their original price."-Churchman's Companion.

THINKING FOR ONESELF; or, an Adventure of the Carewes. Reprinted from "The Monthly Packet." 18mo., 2s. cloth.

THE TOWER BUILDERS, and THE TWO MERCHANTS.

TRUST. By the Author of "Beginnings of Evil." 18mo. 2s.

THE TWO GUARDIANS; or, Home in this World. By the Author of "The Heir of Redclyffe." Fifth edition. Crown 8vo. 6s.

"Nothing can be finer than the heroine; an upright, truthful character, wanting in tact, and not at first free from grave faults, yet full of deep feeling and true religion; strongly consistent, winning her way and inspiring hearty affection by her goodness, real kindness, and entire honesty."—Christian Remembrancer.

THE VOICES OF HARVEST. By the Right Rev. R. Milman, D.D., late Bishop of Calcutta. Fcap. 8vo., 8d.

"An eloquent and religion-breathing little book, in which the marvellous operations of the harvest are pointed out in beautiful language, and occasion thence taken to remind the reader of the necessity of cultivating the soul and heart, that we may reap the harvest of eternal happiness."—Morning Post.

Voices of Christmas. A Tale. By Louis Sand. With an illustration by Dalziel. Fcap. 8vo. 2s.

"We have seldom seen a Christmas book which appeared to us more thoroughly successful. A hearty, English tale, full of piquancy and interest, with considerable humour, in which an under-current of earnest feeling teaches one of the deepest truths of our religion."—*Ecclesiastic*.



- A VILLAGE STORY FOR VILLAGE MAIDENS. In Three Parts. Susan, Esther, and Dorothy; or, the Three Starts in Life. 18mo., cloth, 2s. 6d.
- VOYAGE TO THE FORTUNATE ISLES. 1s.; cloth 1s. 6d.

 An Allegory of the sea of life with its waves and tides, ripples and storms, and each soulin a boat therein, with compass, sails, pilot, chart, &c.
- WAS IT A DREAM? or, the Spirit of Evil-speaking and The New Churchyard; or, Whose will be the First Grave? By the Author of "Amy Herbert." is. 6d.; paper, is.
- THE WAY THROUGH THE DESERT; or, the Caravan.

 By the Right Rev. R. Milman, D.D., late Bishop of Calcutta.

 Fcap. 8vo. 6d.; cloth 1s.

An Allegory, showing how we should walk here to attain life eternal hereafter.

- WESTERLEIGH, AND OTHER TALES. By Mrs. G. J. Preston. Fcap. 8vo., cloth, 2s. 6d.
- THE WIDOW AND HER SON; and other Tales.
 Translated from the German. By the late Rev. W. B. Flower,
 18mo. 28.
- THE WYNNES; or, Many Men, Many Minds. A Tale of every-day life. By the Author of "Aggesden Vicarage," &c. Fcap. 8vo. 5s.

BIOGRAPHY.

HEROES OF THE CROSS. A Series of Biographical Studies of Saints, Martyrs, and Christian Pioneers. By W. H. Davenport Adams. Crown 8vo., cloth, 7s. 6d.

"This is a handsome volume containing biographical sketches of men and women notable for their heroic conduct in the struggle to uphold the standard of the religion of CHRIST. Mr. Adams presents a fair and impartial picture of the heroes selected for delineation. A catholic tone pervades the whole book, and Mr. Adams has provided his readers with a valuable and worthy series of studies from the lives of great men and women."—Church Times.

- LIFE OF DR. ALLESTREE, Canon of Christ Church in 1649. By Bishop Fell. He lived during the Tumults in the reign of King Charles I. 3d.
- LIFE OF BISHOP HACKET. By Thomas Plume, D.D., and edited with large additions and copious notes by Mackenzie E. C. Walcott, B.D. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- LIFE OF NICHOLAS FERRAR, Citizen of London in 1642. Abridged from the Memoir of Dr. Peckard, 1790. 18mo., cloth, 2s.

LIFE OF WILLIAM LAUD, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Martyr. By the Rev. John Baines, S. John's College, Oxford. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

"In Mr. Baines we have no blind worshipper of the man, deeply though he be to be revered by us all; but one who can notice his defects as well as his virtues, and on whose judgment therefore we can rely,"—Oxford Herald.

LIFE OF SISTER ROSALIE. By the Author of "Tales of Kirkbeck." Second Edition. Cloth, 1s.; cheap edition, 6d.

LIVES OF EMINENT ENGLISH DIVINES. By the Rev. W. H. Teale. With Engravings, 5s.; or each Life separate, in paper covers.

Life of Bishop Bull, 9d. Life of Dr. Hammond, 1s. Life of Jones of Nayland, 1s.

LIVES OF ENGLISHMEN IN PAST DAYS.

First Series: containing Herbert, Donne, Ken, Sanderson. 6d. Second Series: Kettlewell, Hammond, Wilson, Mompesson, Bold. 6d.

Third Series: Walton, Wotton, Earl of Derby, Collingwood, Raffles, Exmouth. 10d.

Fourth Series: Alfred the Great, Sir Thomas More, John Evelyn. 1s.

In one volume, cloth, gilt, 2s. 6d.

MEMOIR OF THE REV. R. A. SUCKLING, with Correspondence. By the late Rev. I. Williams. New edition. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

"A well defined picture of a Christian Clergyman living in these later days a life of faith, and having a marked influence on friends and acquaintances, as well as on those committed to his charge."—Chardian.

MEMOIR OF THE REV. H. NEWLAND, M.A., Vicar of S. Marychurch, and Chaplain to the Bishop of Exeter, By the Rev. R. N. Shutte, Rector of S. Mary Steps, Exeter. Feap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.

A MEMOIR OF THE PIOUS LIFE AND HOLY DEATH OF HELEN INCLIS. By the Bishop of Brechin. 4d.

A short tale to show that it does not require "some great thing to make a Saint, and that the commonest and simplest action of every-day life, in one's usual trade or occupation, if done from the love of GOD and in His faith and fear, may assume the value of high virtue."

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CROSS. A Memorial of a Humble Follower of Christ. By the Author of "Devotions for the Sick Room." 18mo. 1s.

MEMOIR OF JOHN AUBONE COOK, B.A., Vicar of South Benfieet and Rural Dean. By the Rev. W. E. Heygate, M.A. 1s. MEMORIAL OF ELIZABETH A 4d.

MEMORIAL OF M. E. D. AND G. E. D. Brief notes of a Christian life and very holy death. By T. B. P. 6d.

HYMNS AND POEMS FOR CHILDREN.

By Mrs. C. F. ALEXANDER.

FIFTY EIGHTH EDITION.

HYMNS FOR LITTLE CHILDREN. 18mo. 6d.; cloth, 1s. School edition, 3d.; cloth, 6d. Accompanying Tunes for ditto by Dr. Gauntlett. 2s. 6d.

MORAL SONGS. With Thirty-nine Vignette Illustrations. 18mo. 8d.; cloth, 1s. School edition, 3d.

NARRATIVE HYMNS FOR VILLAGE SCHOOLS. 18mo., wrapper, 3d.

Accompanying Tunes for ditto, 2s. 6d.

POEMS ON SUBJECTS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.
Parts I. and II., each 6d. wrapper. Complete in one vol.
cloth, 1s, 6d.

HYMNS, DESCRIPTIVE AND DEVOTIONAL; for the Use of Schools. 2d.

By the Author of "The Daily Life of a Christian Child."

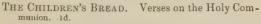
DAILY LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHILD: a Poem, in which the duties of each day in a child's life are set forth. 3d. in wrapper; cheap edition, wrapper, 1d.; on a sheet, 1d.; mounted on board, 6d.

VERSES FOR THE SUNDAYS AND HOLYDAYS OF THE CHRISTIAN YEAR. With eight illustrations. 2s.; morocco, 4s.

VERSES FOR CHRISTIAN CHILDREN ON THE DUTIES, TRIALS, AND TEMPRATIONS OF THEIR DAILY LIVES. Edited by the Rev. J. S. B. Monsell, LL.D., Rector of S. Nicholas', Guildford. Second edition. 6d.

SEVEN CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY. In Verse. With Illustrations. 6d.

SEVEN SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY. In Verse. Illustrated by Dalziel. 6d.



THE BAPTISMAL NAME, AND THE FLOWER GARDEN.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, set in easy Verse, for Young Children to commit to memory. 6d.

"Applying the spiritual sense of the Commandments in simple verse."-English Review.

HYMNS FOR CHILDREN. By the late Rev. J. M. Neale, D.D. 3d. each Series, or bound together, 1s. First Series: Hymns for the Days of the Week, Hours, and

Holy Days. Second Series: Hymns for Special Occasions-Church Duties,

Privileges, and Festivals. Third Series: Hymns chiefly for the Saints' Days.

VERSES FOR CHURCH SCHOOLS. By Rosa Raine. New and Enlarged edition. 6d.

HYMNS ON THE CATECHISM. By the late Rev. Isaac Williams, B.D. 6d., cloth 1s.

HYMNS FOR INFANT CHILDREN; on Church, School, Baptism, and Belief, &c. 1d. Accompanying Tunes for ditto, by the Rev. J. B. Dykes. 1s.

VERSES FOR CHILDREN AND THE CHILD-LIKE. By F. E. Weatherley, M.A., author of "Muriel," &c. 6d.

LAST SLEEP OF A CHRISTIAN CHILD: a Poem, showing how a Christian Child should meet death. 3d. in wrapper; on a sheet, 1d.; mounted on board, 6d.

"Very touchingly written."-English Review.

PROSE HYMN FOR CHILDREN. By the Rev. W. J. Jenkins, Rector of Fillingham. 1d., or 7s. per 100.

THE GRANDFATHER'S CHRISTMAS STORY. 6d.

A true tale of a little boy who always kept in mind the SAVIOUR'S Love and "Simply and touchingly told, in a strain likely to win the ear and heart of a young child."—Suffolk Heraid.

By the same author,

THE MOTHER'S EASTER OFFERING. 6d.

A tale in Verse of GOD'S chastening hand in the death of young children, and the mother's submission.

OLD WILLIAM; or, the Longest Day. 6d.

A tale in Verse of the good and unselfish use made by a little Girl of her money.



POETRY.

ATHANASIUS, and other Poems. By a Fellow of a

"The writer possesses the historical as well as the poetical mind. His tone reveals his deep sympathy with antiquity. His style of thought and versification frequently remind us agreeably of Mr. Keble."—Cuardian.

Annuals and Perennials; or, Seed-time and Harvest. By C. M. Waring. Demy 8vo., beautifully illustrated by Macquoid. 5s.

Verses for every Sunday in the Year, chiefly founded on the Collects, Annual in their use, Perennial in their antiquity.

THE ALTAR. By the late Rev. I. Williams, B.D., author of the "Cathedral," Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.

This work consists of Meditations in Verse on the several parts of the Service for the Holy Communion, applying them to corresponding parts of the Passion of our LORD.

THE ADVENT COLLECTS PARAPHRASED IN VERSE. By the Rev. T. R. J. Laugharne, M.A. 1s.

CHRISTMAS EVE, and other Poems. By Mrs. Cuthbert Orlebar. 18mo. 1s.

CLAUDIA: THE DAYS OF MARTYRDOM. A Tale. By A. M. Goodrich. Fcap. 8vo., cloth, 2s. 6d.

"Marked by a devotional spirit, pleasant to read, and unaffected. It contains a faithful picture of the early Church and many of its customs, its tone of feeling, perils, acts of heroism, and devotion to CHRIST."—"Oxford Herald.

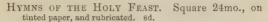
DAILY HYMNS. A Volume of Poems. By the late Venerable Archdeacon Evans, author of "Tales of the Ancient British Church." Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

ECHOES FROM OLD CORNWALL. By the Rev. R. S. Hawker. Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d.

ECHOES OF OUR CHILDHOOD. By the Author of "Everley," &c. Fcap. 4to. 2s. 6d.

"The prettiest book of nursery poems we have seen since the days of Jane Taylor's ever-memorable books."—Monthly Packet.
"A volume of simple and pleasing verses,"—Guardian.

GIFTS AND LIGHT. Church Verses. By the Rev. A. M. Morgan. Fcap. 8vo. 3s.



HYMNS AND LYRICS FOR THE SEASONS AND SAINTS' DAYS OF THE CHURCH. By the Rev. G. Moultrie. Fcap.

"In Mr. Moultrie's volume we have lighted upon an oasis in the desert. It is poetry, it is original poetry, and it is of very varied character."—Literary Churchman.

"Full of refined thought and pure religious feeling."—Ecclesiastic.
"One of the best, if not, indeed, the very best volume of sacred poetry we have seen for some years."—Scandard, Afric 18, 1867.

HYMNS FOR THE SICK. By the late Rev. J. M. Neale. 6d.; cloth, 1s.

Intended to set before the sick and suffering some of those sources of "strong consolation" which it has pleased GOD to lay up for them.

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE. A Poem. Dedicated (with permission from himself) to the late Author of "The Christian Year." Fcap. 8vo. 1s. 6d.

LYRA SANCTORUM; Lays for the Minor Festivals. Edited by the Rev. W. J. Deane. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

"We hail the appearance of such a book with pleasure: it is agreeably significant as to the progress of sacred poetry in our age. It is a collection of historical ballads, designed for the most part to commemorate the sufferings and celebrate the triumphs of those who were martyred in the early ages of the Church. Many of the poems are singularly elegant and impressive."—Morning Post.

LAYS CONCERNING THE EARLY CHURCH. By the Rev. J. F. Russell. Fcap. 8vo. 1s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—S. John's Torture; S. Ignatius; The Thundering Legion; The Martyr's Funeral; The Council of Nice; S. Ambrose, &c.

LAYS OF THE HEBREWS, and other Poems. By Mary Benn. 12mo. 2s.

"There is a great deal of tone and spirit in Miss Benn's Lays of the Hebrews. The Grave of Saul' would be creditable to any one, and there are other poems equally striking and melodious." —Chardian.

A MARTYR BISHOP, AND OTHER VERSES. By the Author of "The Chorister Brothers." Fcap. 8vo., cloth, 3s.

THE MARTYRDOM OF S. POLYCARP. By the Rev. G. Moultrie. 8vo. 1s.

MEMORIALIA CORDIS: Sonnets and Miscellaneous Poems. By the Rev. C. I. Black. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—To the Memory of W. Archer Butler; The Tomb of Swift; Famine of 1847; Rydal Mount; The Redbreast in Church; Gethsemane, &c.

- MEDIÆVAL HYMNS, SEQUENCES, and other Poems, translated by the Rev. J. M. Neale. Second Edition. 2s.
- THE NUN OF ENZKLÖSTERLE; a Legend of the Black Forest. By Mrs. T. Ogilvy, (née Bosanquet.) 3s. 6d.
- POEMS. By the Rev. Claude Magnay. New edit. with additions. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- POEMS. By C. A. M. W. Post 8vo. 5s.
- PIETAS PUERILIS; or, Childhood's Path to Heaven, and other Poems. By the Rev. A. Evans. Svo. 2s. 6d.
- PIETAS METRICA. By the late Rev. T. M. Hopkins, Incumbent of S. Saviour's, Paddington. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.
- PREPARATIVES FOR DEATH. Being Selections from the Poems of Bishop Ken. 18mo. 1s.
- RIVER REEDS. By the Author of "Beatrice." Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.
- Songs and Ballads for Manufacturers. By the late Rev. J. M. Neale. 3d.
- THE SWORD, AND THE CROSS. By the Rev. J. O. Dakeyne. Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d.
- "Commend themselves to the reader more by their spiritual import, yet they are not wanting in passages of considerable force and beauty."—Morning Post.
- SONNETS AND VERSES, from Home and Parochial Life. By the Rev. H. K. Cornish. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.
- THE SOLITARY; or, a Lay from the West. With other Poems in English and Latin. By Mary Benn. 12mo. 3s.6d.
- VERSES FOR CHURCH SCHOOLS. By Rosa Raine. New and enlarged edition. 6d.

+

BOOKS AT 2d. EACH.

Annandale; or, the Danger of Self-Confidence. A Welsh Tale.

THE BOY MARTYR. A Tale of Norwich, A.D. 1137.

THE BROTHER'S SACRIFICE; or, a Soldier's Generosity Rewarded. By Miss Bunbury.

THE CAT AND HER KITTENS; a Fable on Disobedience and Mischief.

THE CHILD'S MISSION; a True Tale of the influence of a very young and dying Child in the Conversion of her mother from Sin to Holiness.

DISHONESTY, and the Loss of Character which follows it. By the Author of "The Conceited Pig."

THE DUMB BOY; showing how, though Dumb, he felt the influence of our Holy Religion. By Selina Bunbury.

EDWARD MORRIS; a Tale of Cottage Life. By the late Rev. E. Monro.

A FEW PRAYERS AND A FEW WORDS ABOUT PRAYER. By the Rev. F. E. Paget.

HOW TO BE USEFUL AND HAPPY; a Few Words of Advice, with Rules for a Young Person. By the Rev. F. E. Paget.

I AM SO HAPPY; or, the Reward of Sorrow borne Religiously. By Miss Bunbury.

LITTLE STORIES FOR LITTLE CHILDREN.

CONTENTS:—The Little Herd Boy; The Sensible Elephant; The Starling; Sleep and Death; The Wooden Leg; The Flowers, the Field, and the Pearl.

THE LITTLE LACE GIRL; a Tale of Irish Industry. By the Author of "The Conceited Pig."

LUCY FORD; or, Hearing the Story of a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

MARY WILSON; or, Self-Denial. A Tale for May-Day.

MARGARET HUNT; or, the Patient and Forgiving School-Girl. By the Author of "The Conceited Pig."

TWOPENCE.

MINNIE HASLEM; or, the Benefit of having Something to do.

PATTIE GRAHAME; or, School Trials, Learning, and Benefits.

THE RAVENS; a Fairy Tale. By the Author of "The Conceited Pig."

Rose Eglinton; or, The Stolen Child. By the late Rev. W. B. Flower.

THE SPRAINED ANCLE; or, the Punishment of Forgetfulness. By the Author of "The Conceited Pig."

STORY OF A PROMISE THAT WAS KEPT.

STORY OF A PRIMROSE; wherein is shown the Result of Disobedience to Parents, and a Lesson in Kindness is given.

THE STRAY DONKEY; a Lesson on Cruelty to Animals. By a Donkey himself.

TALE OF A TORTOISE, with its Adventures; and A STORY OF KING ALFRED THE GREAT.

THE TWO SHEEP; a Lesson from the Adventures of an Erring or Stray Sheep.

WILLIAM DALE; or, The Lame Boy.

BOOKS AT 3d. EACH.

THE BLIND CURATE'S CHILD. By Selina Bunbury.

DAISY. By Selina Hancock.

THE FAIRY PERA; or the Snowdrops.

GLIMPSE OF THE UNSEEN.

Sampson the Fisherman, and his Son. By Selina Bunbury.

S. Andrew's Day; or, the Brother's Influence. By the Author of "The Sunbeam,"

Two Christmas Eves.

WILLIE MORGAN. A Tale for Good Friday. By a Clergyman's Daughter.



BOOKS AT 4d. EACH.

The late Rev. J. M. NEALE, D.D.

- ERICK'S GRAVE; or, How a faithful Russian Servant laid down his life for his Master.—The Helmsman of Lake Erie; a Tale of American Courage in a Burning Ship.—The Plague of 1665 at Evam, in Derbyshire, and how it was met.
- THE DREAM OF S. PERPETUA, a Martyr of Carthage; and The Cross of Constantine.
- THE LEGEND OF S. DOROTHEA, Virgin and Martyr, of Cæsarea.
- THE SIEGE OF NISIEIS, and how Sapor, King of Persia, and his Host were overthrown by the Faith of its Bishop; and, The Death of Julian, the Apostate Emperor, A.D. 363, the fearful Tale of one who renounced his Christian Faith.

THE TWO HUTS. An Allegory.

The Rev. F. E. PAGET, M.A.

- A SUNDAY WALK AND A SUNDAY TALK; or, How the Yateshull Boys enjoyed that Day.
- BEATING THE BOUNDS; its Religious Meaning and Origin, as taught at Yateshull.
- HALLOWMAS EVE; or, a Conversation on Old Church Legends and Customs.
- THE SINGERS; or, a Story for Boys in a Country Church Choir.
- THE WAKE; or, How the Dedication Feast of Yateshull Church was kept.
- THE BONFIRE; or, How the Fifth of November was kept at Yateshull.
- THE PANCAKE BELL; its Origin and Meaning.

The late Rev. E. MONRO, M.A.

THE COTTAGE IN THE LANE; or the Sad Effects of Indecision of Character.

THE DRUNKARD'S BOY; or, God's Help in Misfortune.

THE RAILROAD BOY; or, True Peace in Suffering.

Annie's Grave; or, More than Feeling required in True Religion.

ROBERT LEE; or, The Recruiting Party.

MARY COOPER; or, Choosing One's Own Path in Life.

DICK, THE HAYMAKER,

WALTER, THE CONVICT.

THE TALE OF A COTTON GOWN. Manchester Life.

The Rev. H. D. PEARSON.

HUGH; or, the Influence of Christian Art.

HOLY STONE; a Story of Two Penitents: showing what real Repentance is.

SIBYL MARCHANT; or, The Strengthening and Refreshing of the Soul under Trials.

LITTLE RUTH GRAY; or, the Effect of a Good Example even by a Little Child.

OLD OLIVER DALE.

Annie's Cross; or, "I wish I was God's Child." A Tale.

Annie Merton; or, the Child of Mercy. By Selina Hancock.

AMY, THE KING'S DAUGHTER.

A story of one who really felt and acted as a daughter of the Great King of heaven and earth.

AUTUMN AND SPRING.

ALICE PARKER; or, the Tea Drinking. By the Author of "Susan Carter," &c.

THE BOY PRINCE OF MERCIA. A Tale of the Heptarchy.

THE CHORISTERS OF S. MARY'S. A Legend of Christmas-tide, A.D. circa 1143. By W. S. Rockstro.

THE CHORISTER'S FALL.

A tale of a Chorister whose vanity led him to fall, but who was enabled to rejoice in the illness which brought him to repentance,

CORNELIE; or, Self-will. By Selina Hancock.

THE CORNER-STONE. An account of the Laying the Foundation-stone of a Church.

A DAY'S MISFORTUNES, OR TRY AGAIN; or, the Benefit of Perseverance and Good Temper. By the late Rev. W. B. Flower.

A DAY'S PLEASURE; or, the Consecration of the District Church. By the Author of "Susan Carter."

THE ERROR CORRECTED; or, the Faithful Priest. By Henry Shirley Bunbury.

A story of the union between Saxons and Normans.

ELLEN MEYRICK; a Story on False Excuses. By the Rev. W. E. Heygate.

EVE GODSMARKE. By Selina Hancock.

THE FATHER'S HOPE; or, the Wanderer Returned. By the Author of "Going Abroad."

GABRIEL'S DREAM AND WAKING. By the Author of "The Chamois Hunter," "The Cross-bearer," &c.

GEORGE Malings; or, the Sunday Truant. By the Author of "Susan Carter," "The Secret," "Old Betty," &c.

HAROLD. A Ghost Story with a Moral. By the Author of "The Little Gardeners."

ISLAND CHOIR; or, the Children of the Child JESUS.

JOHN BORTON; or, a Word in Season. By Mrs. J. S. Henslow.

KITTY-SCRANNING. A Tale for London Boys.

LEGEND OF THE LAND OF FLIES.

LEGEND OF S. CHRISTOPHER.

LITTLE MARY; or, the Captain's Gold Ring. By Selina Bunbury.

THE LITTLE MINERS; a Fairy Tale of an Explosion in a Mine. By the Rev. W. Gresley.

THE LOST ONE FOUND. A true Story of the Baptism and Holy Death of a Young Girl.

LILY OF THE VALLEY. By F. B.

LITTLE WALTER, THE LAME CHORISTER.

A tale, to show the great importance of each one's individual example for good or for evil,

MY DREAM. A true account of a Dream of the Heavenly Jerusalem, with the lesson of purity in heart, needed for all to see Gop.

MEMORIAL OF ELIZABETH A----.

MEMOIR OF HELEN INGLIS.

MISS PECK'S ADVENTURES; or, the folly of going out of our own sphere of Duty. By the Author of "The Conceited Pig."

MISS CHESTER'S WORK. By F. A. H.

OUR LITTLE KATHLEEN. By Selina Hancock.

PAY NEXT WEEK. By Anna B. F. Leigh Spencer, author of "The Co-Heiress of Willingham."

PERSEVERANCE. A Tale for Working Girls.

THE PRIDE OF ROSE LYNN. By Selina Hancock.

RAGS AND TATTERS. By the Author of "Everley."

RUTH DIGBY. By the Author of "Trevenan Court,"



THE SECRET; a Tale of Christmas Decorations.

By the Author of "Susan Carter."

STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS. By Nona Bellairs.

"A pretty Story of Factory Life, exhibiting what may be done by kind and zealous ministerial watchfulness and superintendence."—Clerical Journal.

UPWARD AND ONWARD. A Story for Girls.

WILLIE GRANT; or, Honesty is the Best Policy. A Tale of the Fidelity and Reward of a Lad in very humble life.

THE YOUNG ANGLERS OF VICHY. By the Author of "Willie Grant; or, Honesty is the best Policy."

THE TWO SURPLICES. By Ada Cambridge.

BOOKS AT 6d. EACH.

ANGELS. By Mrs. Stone, author of "God's Acre."

BEN'S ANGEL. By the Author of "Neddie's Care," "Tiny Pollie's Ups and Downs," &c.

BETTY CORNWELL AND HER GRANDCHILDREN; or, the Path of Obedience.

BISHOP'S VISIT. By the Author of the "Bishop's Little Daughter."

CHARLEY'S TRIP TO THE BLACK MOUNTAIN.

CHARLOTTE DREW'S PINCH.

 Λ tale for little girls, on the fatal effects of the first step in disobedience to parents, and of choosing bad companions at school.

EASY TALES FOR LITTLE CHILDREN. With Engravings, and in Large Type.

John's Disobedience; Fanny's Birthday; Little Mary's Fall; Susan's Cross Behaviour; The Lost Child; The Torn Frock; &c.

EDNA GRANT; or, Never Lonely.

ELLEN ASHTON; or, the Light of CHRIST'S Love. By C. H. M.

THE EVERLASTING HILLS; an Allegory.

THE FAIR AND THE CONFIRMATION; a Lesson to thoughtless village girls on lightly treating God's holy ordinance.



SIXPENCE.

THE FOUNDLING; a Tale of the Times of S. Vincent de Paul.

THE FORCE OF HABIT; or, the Story of Widow Monger. By F. C. Lefroy.

THE GARDEN IN THE WILDERNESS; or, the Church of CHRIST in the midst of the World. An Allegory.

By the Author of GEORGE FOSTER, THE PAGE. "Susannah."

GEORGE TURNER, THE LONDON APPRENTICE; or, 'Tis Good to be Honest and True.

HONOR DELAFONT; a true Tale of a Mother's Prayer, and its Answer. By the Author of "Sunsetting."

JOEY; or, the Story of an Old Coat. By the late Rev. E. Monro.

JOY IN DUTY. By the Author of "The Master of Churchill Abbots, and his little Friends," and "Play and

LEGEND OF GOLDEN WATER.

LITTLE STORIES FOR LITTLE CHILDREN. With Engravings, and in large Type.

MARY MANSFIELD; or, the Life and Trials of a Country Girl.

MERCY DOWNER; or Church and Chapel. Wrapper. THE MIRRORS; a Story for Children.

A story of a little Girl, who was taught by our LORD'S parables to see things eternal, of which all things here are but the pictures or emblems. MILLIE'S JOURNAL. Edited by the Author of "Gentle

Influence." Is the plain unvarnished Narrative, or Journal, of a young and well educated English Girl, who accompanied her family into the Far West, Macomb, Illinois, U.S.

MIDSUMMER EVE. By the late Rev. E. Monro.

A tale of the fidelity of a young girl to the daughter of her mistress, and of her influence for good on the father and others.

MILLY WHEELER. By the Author of "Amy Wilson."

THE MYSTERY OF MARKING; or, Christian Responsibility. By the Right Rev. R. Milman, late Bishop of Cal-

An Allegory for School Girls, teaching them how to work out the Pattern of our LORD and SAVIOUR in themselves.





SIXPENCE.

NANNY: a Sequel to "Harry and Archie." By the late Rev. E. Monro.

NELLY UPTON'S TRIALS; or, The Hidden Path. By the Author of "Strength and Weakness," &c.

NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND; or, the Two Fortune Tellers. By the Author of "Willie Grant."

A tale for village girls, of encouragement to persevere in the course of true religion, and to find in that the best way to be useful and happy.

THE NEGLECTED OPPORTUNITY.

NINE SHILLINGS A WEEK; or, How Rachel Down kept House.

NURSE AMY.

OLD BETTY. A Sketch from Real Life. In two parts, 6d. each.

AN OLD WOMAN'S STORY; or, Trust in Trial. By Nona Bellairs.

THE PATH OF LIFE. By the Author of the "Seven Corporal Works of Mercy."

PETER NOBLE THE ROYALIST. An Historical Tale of the 17th Century. By the Author of "The Apple Blossom."

PHILIP BEZANT; or, Is Revenge Sweet? By the Author of "Likes and Dislikes."

THE POST-OFFICE WINDOW; being a Tale of the Night School. By the Author of "Likes and Dislikes."

THE PRECIOUS STONES OF THE KING'S HOUSE: an Allegory founded on Holy Scripture.

RACHEL ASHBURN; a Story of Real Life. By the Author of "Harry and Walter."

READY AND DESIROUS; or, A Lent's Lessons. Second Edition.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A SOLDIER'S WIDOW.

A true tale; related as told by the Widow herself. She followed the fortunes of the 28th Regiment for eleven years of fatigue, danger, and death, at Copenhagen, Corunna, and Barossa.

THE SEVEN CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY. In a Packet, or cloth.

THE SEVEN SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY. In a Packet, or cloth.

SIXPENCE.

THE SHEPHERDS OF BETHLEHEM: a Story of the Nativity of our LORD.

Sister's Care; or, How a very young girl took care of her little orphan sister. By the Author of "Michael the Chorister."

STORIES ON THE LORD'S PRAYER. By the Author of "Amy Herbert."

SUSAN SPELLMAN: a Tale of the Trials she met with in the Silk Mills at Horton.

SUNSET REVERIE; an Allegory: in which Mirth and Earnest pass through the trials of this world.

SUNSETTING; or, Old Age in its Glory. A story of happiness, peace, and contentment.

THE THREEFOLD PROMISE AND THE THREEFOLD BLESSING. Published in aid of the Funds of the Mission Church, S. George in the East, London.

TREBURSAYE SCHOOL; or, the Power of Example. A Story for Choristers and Schoolboys.

THE TWO BIRTHDAYS, and other Tales. A packet of Six Reward Books. By the Author of "Harold, a Ghost Story with a Moral."

THE TWINS. A Tale of Warning to Boys; showing the misery caused by giving way to angry and unkind temper.

THE TWO FRIENDS; or, Charley's Escape.

A tale of the influence of a good companion, and the warning of his sudden death.

THE VICAR'S GUEST. By Ada Cambridge.

WILLIE COLLINS AND THE PONY FROSTY. By B. E. B.

YOUNG CHURCHMAN'S ALPHABET. The leading events of our Lord's Life, illustrated in verse, with an engraving to each letter.

THE YOUNG SOLDIERS, or, the Double Birthday; and other Tales. In a Packet, or cloth.

